
DR. BROOKE'S
DISCOURSES
PREACHED BEFORE
THE LATE KING,
AND
HIS PRESENT MAJESTY;
AND BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.



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SEVERAL
DISCOURSES
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By Z. BROOKE, D.D. K
Fellow of St. JOHN's College, in CAMBRIDGE,
AND
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

CAMBRIDGE,
Printed by J. BENTHAM, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
For W. THURLBOURN & J. WOODYER in *Cambridge*;
J. BEECROFT in Pater-noster Row, J. DODSLEY in
Pall-Mall, *London*; J. FLETCHER in *Oxford*; TODD &
SOTHERAN in *York*.

M.DCC.LXIII.



TO THE
K I N G.

AS every attempt to do justice to our most holy Religion must be matter of peculiar pleasure and concernment to your Majesty; I have
pre.

DEDICATION.

presumed to request your permission, most renowned Sovereign, to lay before you with all humility these small fruits of my well-intentioned labour.

IN truth what can more rightly appertain to your Royal Dignity, or be more becoming my Station, than this Address of the following Discourses, upon some very momentous points in that important System of religious doctrines and duties, which is adorned and recommended in such a singular manner by the splendour of so illustrious an example? And
in

DEDICATION.

in this reflection I am strongly supported not only by the unanimous voice of your own faithful Subjects, but also by the common suffrage of Mankind.

I am,

with the justest reverence,

and most dutiful regard,

May it please your MAJESTY,

your most obedient

and most devoted Servant,

*St. John's College,
Cambridge,
Nov. 26. 1763.*

Z. BROOKE.

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DIS-

DISCOURSE I.

PREACHED AT
THE CHAPEL ROYAL
IN
ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

A

DISCOVER

DISCOVER

DISCOVER

DISCOVER

DISCOURSE I.

I SAM. XII. 24.

*Only fear the Lord, and serve him
in truth with all your heart : for
consider how great things he hath
done for you.*

THE works of Nature and of Grace are not less stupendous in themselves, than they are beneficial in their influence and effect. They are at once expressive of the majesty of God, and declarative of his goodness to Man. They prove the most forcible excitement of our admiration and awe, and become the most powerful engagement to love and obedience.

THE consideration therefore of the marvellous dispensations of Heaven towards the sons of men must be matter both of interest and of duty. It must leave an impression upon the mind, if pursued with seriousness and attention, that cannot fail to have a religious and an happy tendency. It must inflame our breasts with gratitude towards the great Author of our being, and dispose our souls to render him the just tribute of love and praise. It will furnish us with the best reason and strongest inducement to fear the Lord, and to serve him in truth with all our heart: that principle alone, which can recommend us to his regard and protection; that source only, whence must proceed the blessings, and the comfort of our lives.

THESE reflections open the way to the two following important points :

I. WHAT

DISCOURSE I. 21

I. WHAT are the great things, which the Lord our God hath done for us?

II. AND in what respect do they become peculiar motives of fear and obedience?

A subject truly not more full of dignity, than edification.

THE whole Visible World is an illustrious display of the Divine favour and liberality to Man. Whatever may contribute to the dignity and accommodations, or administer to the gratifications and improvement of life; whatever can entertain the mind, exhilarate the heart, and elevate the soul, is contrived for the sons of men in this wonderful scene of things, with peculiar care and distinguished regard; and conferred upon us with endless profusion and variety.

MARK the several gradations in the great scale of earthly beings. Observe how amazingly they combine to form one regular and beautiful System. See with what astonishing powers each part is endued, at once to carry on its own operations, and to promote the order and the welfare of the whole. Consider now what our station and allotment is, in this wide range of creation, how highly dignified and exalted. The first rank in this sublunary world is appointed to the race of Man; and to him is committed the dominion of all things. And in this distinguished place of honour and eminence, reflect too how mindful the Lord our God hath been of our preservation and well being. "He hath given us all things richly to enjoy. He hath withheld from us no manner of thing, that is good." All inferiour creatures are put under our subjection, and may be made subservient to the use and convenience of life. Even their lives are destined
to

to our wants and necessities. What striking tokens of the regard of our Maker! what singular instances of his bounty and beneficence!

INDEED in this view alone, the pride of the Stoic might be tempted to conclude, that all things were made only for the purposes of men. But this vanity will soon be considerably abated, if not entirely extinguished, when we behold the face of the creation in another respect.

IN the constitution and disposition of things, there is abundant reason to magnify the power and the wisdom of the Creator; and the manifestation of his glory seems to be one principal cause of that multiplicity of creatures, with which the Universe abounds, and of those many admirable contrivances that are made for their nurture and continuance in being. Undoubtedly in this grand scheme of Pro-

vidence, the security and the happiness of all other things living is consulted as well as our own. In truth in many cases we are not less instrumental in promoting their welfare, than they are conducive to the service of man.* But then the gracious designs and the great benignity of Heaven towards the Human Species is more extraordinary and remarkable, both in that elevation of state, in which we are placed, and in those refined and superiour faculties, with which we are endowed.

WE alone of all beings in this lower world are capable of those sublime contemplations and those important reflections, which the ways of Providence and

* The several preceding reflections are enlarged upon, and exemplified in a manner inimitable by Mr. Pope, with his usual accuracy and sublimity. Essay on Man. Epist. I. §.v.-ix. Epist. III. v.24-70.

Two uncommon qualities in the same writer. So an ancient Critic, eminent both for his candour and learning, has observed with equal truth and judgment. Longin. περὶ ὑψους §. 33.

the

the sense of Duty are apt to suggest. We only are able to investigate the great design of our common Creator, in the formation of things, and to arrive at a distinct knowledge of his will. We only can discover, that life and all its blessings are at the sovereign disposal of Heaven, and that we are accountable to the judgment of the Almighty for our conduct. We alone can comprehend, of what vast moment and near concern it is to merit his favour and protection. We only can extend our views beyond the short limit of this perishable state; and are alone susceptible of those comforts in the life that now is, and of that blessedness in the life that is to come, which Religion proposes to faith and obedience. Well then may we join the Apostle, and pronounce with a voice of triumph and exultation; "We are made only a little lower than the Angels, and crowned with glory and honour."

OUR

OUR gracious Lord has not thought it enough to give us dignity of station, and endow us with superiour excellencies above the rest of his creatures here on earth; nor has he judged it sufficient to make the most ample provision for our subsistence and felicity; He has even consulted the innocent gratifications of our bodily perceptions, and been studious of the cultivation and entertainment of our mental capacities. See what an inexhaustible fund of pleasures Providence has furnished for the rapturous efforts of the human imagination! what a wide field and immeasurable space it has opened, for the more sedate exertion of our intellectual faculties!

LOOK through the whole compass of Nature, and observe with what wonderful marks of the Sublime and the Beautiful every part is signally impressed! what admirable wisdom is discoverable in the contrivance!

trivance! what exquisite art is discernable in the execution! The rude extent of enormous mountains, the huge precipice, the boundless tract of the troubled ocean, and the immense regions of everlasting day exhibit a prospect so truly great and majestic, as is wont to engage the mind with the highest admiration: an emotion of soul not unattended with much delight. The Vegetable World is richly adorned and diversified with every thing that can please the sense, and gladden the heart of man. The large expanse of Heaven and the Starry Firmament expose to our view a most affecting scene of magnificence and beauty. How are our breasts apt to glow, and our hearts to be expanded at the contemplation of these things! how are such thoughts disposed to warm the soul with a spirit of devotion towards the great Author of the Universe, and to fill us with an uncommon awe and veneration of him! The Earth we inhabit abounds with exhaustless treasures,

fures, to support the splendor, and to supply us with the elegancies of life.

NOR has the great Lord of all things been more studious to promote our pleasure and amusement in his Visible Works, than to consult our benefit and improvement. The book of Nature is full of instruction, excellent in itself, and extensive in its influence. It is written in strong characters and legible to all; and there is abundant matter to raise our curiosity, and make us inquisitive.

A careful survey of the works of God tends alike to the proficiency both of our moral and intellectual accomplishments. It is fitted in the best manner to enlarge our experience without measure, and to extend our knowledge without bounds. It is an effectual means to open and humanize the heart, and to infuse into us a principle of universal goodness. For how
can

can that man's benevolence be scanty and confined, who regards the large and diffusive munificence of his all-bountiful Master? With what conscience can we indulge a cruel and vindictive temper, who consider the forbearance and forgiveness of our Father, which is in heaven: "who maketh his sun to shine on the Good and on the Bad; and sendeth rain on the Just and on the Unjust?" How can we chuse but learn, to be helpful and compassionate to the distressed and afflicted; who are observant of the all-gracious Providence of our common Creator, whose tender mercies are so conspicuous and redundant over all his works?

THE works of Nature are a full manifestation of the great goodness and majesty of God. The dispensations of Grace are a singular declaration of his justice and mercy. The creation of the world is one general display of the adorable perfections
of

of the Almighty. The redemption of mankind is a wonderful demonstration of his more peculiar affection towards the sons of men, and of the tenderest concern for our happiness. The Gospel-covenant is at once a glorious vindication of the righteousness of Heaven, and an extraordinary notification of the egregious unworthiness and insufficiency of Man.

UPON the Christian Plan an efficacious provision is made for those wants and infirmities of our spiritual nature, which reason alone is unable to furnish. A ready and certain method is invented to guide the understanding: a sovereign remedy is prescribed to rectify the will: a powerful means is pointed out to preserve the purity of the heart. In short, we have in this scheme of religion the firmest support of our peace and comfort in this world, and the best security of our eternal salvation.

THROUGH

THROUGH the impulse of passion or the misguidance of prejudice, through the vehemence of inordinate appetites, or through a certain eagerness and sollicitude for the things of this life, we are very prone to be subdued by temptation, to the neglect or transgression of the injunctions of our Maker. And upon every deviation from duty or return to obedience, the slender succours of Reason prove no sure relief against the apprehensions of guilt; the feeble efforts of Nature no effectual prevention of offences for the future. But the Religion of Jesus has secured us against those fears, and guarded us against these dangers. The blood of the Only Begotten of God is made the propitiation of sin, and the influence of the Holy Ghost is given for our aid and direction.

THE Christian Law has defined the compass of Moral Duty with clearness and precision; and those endless debates both in
Ancient

Ancient and Modern philosophy, debates indeed of all others the most important, are at once determined upon the plainest principles, and by the most sovereign authority.

To obey the will of God is declared to be the chief good of man; and a never-changing state of retribution, either in sufferings without intermission, or in a degree of blessedness for evermore is made the end and motive of such obedience. And provided our heart is right with God, and our endeavours honest and unfeigned, comfortable allowances are offered for the frailties of nature; a gracious acceptance is promised of our imperfect services.

Now this is a pitch of righteousness attainable by All. This is a foundation of happiness not to be destroyed by any contingencies of human life.

THE

DISCOURSE I. * 31

THE vanity of worldly enjoyments is painted in so lively and striking colours by Christ and his Apostles, as of things precarious in their tenure, at best of a transient nature, neither answerable to our expectations, nor adequate to our desires; but full only of wretched disappointment and mortification; as is sufficient to create in every rational mind, intent on happiness, a contempt or indifference. And the desirableness of heavenly treasures is figured out, under such rapturous scenes of transcendant blessedness, as if duly pondered in the heart, are powerful enough to move our affection, and engage our pursuit.

THE God, whom we are bound to serve, is characterized in the Gospel under the most exalted notions of sanctity and virtue; and upon this God of the most refined purity and holiness is placed all our hopes of happiness or misery, and that for endless ages.

B

Now

Now this consideration, if we are regardful of our welfare, must forcibly constrain us to avoid that pollution of soul and impurity of life, which are an abomination in his sight. It must strongly urge us on to acquire such habits of innocence and goodness, as are best fitted to procure his favour, and may render us most worthy of his acceptance and protection. And we are encouraged to stretch every nerve, and to contend with all our might for these virtuous attainments, by a full assurance, that such good dispositions and holy resolutions will be strengthened and made effectual, by the co-operation of that Divine Spirit, who is our only safe conductor in the paths of truth and duty; who is alone the fountain and dispenser of all Grace; the sole author and perfecter of our Sanctification.

THUS it appears, that every method has been made use of, that infinite Wisdom could

DISCOURSE I. 33

could contrive, or Almighty Power could execute to render our abode commodious, pleasureable, and secure, in this turbulent and perilous scene of earthly things, and to insure our justification and salvation, in the glories of that heavenly and everlasting kingdom, which is to be revealed.

WE have the providential care and special super-intendance of a most tender Father, for our safety and well-being: we have the all-gracious influence and all-powerful aid of the most benevolent Spirit of Holiness, for our conduct and comfort: we have the prevailing merits and intercession of a most merciful Redeemer, for the support of our hopes and our confidence.

THESE are the great things, that the Lord our God hath done for us.

THERE is wanting then no great degree of reflection, to convince us of the reasonableness and propriety of the exhortation, given by the Prophet in the Text. There needs but little weight of argument to incline us to the practice of the duty there enjoined.

EVERY thing, that can either affect an ingenuous breast, or interest a sound and deliberate mind powerfully combines to excite our love and our obedience. If we are not divested of the tender feelings of nature; if we retain any generous and grateful sentiments; if the largest hopes and the most alarming fears can make an impression upon the will of man, or become an incitement to action; Then surely we have the justest cause “to serve the Lord our God with fear, and to rejoice unto him with reverence.”

WE

WE are prompted from within to cherish an affection and express a regard to whatever is productive of good or preventive of evil to us. It is an honest effort of nature to conciliate favour and encourage assistance, for our preservation and welfare. This emotion of soul we are apt to experience towards our own species, in a more especial manner. But beings of our own order are not the only objects of our benevolence and esteem. Creatures of a lower rank, the Irrational, nay, even the Inanimate, participate in some measure of this disposition from us. We are fond of the useful animal, and value the fruitful field, that contribute to our pleasure and advantage, no less than we respect the kind friend and endearing parent, that are studious to consult our well-being and happiness.

How inflamed then ought our love to be, how exalted our affection towards that

36 DISCOURSE I.

all-bounteous Being, whose providence secures us, every moment we live, from such variety of harms, that are likely to befall us, and whose goodness signalizes itself to us daily, in such wonderful and numerous instances of blessings!

NOTHING certainly but an extreme perversion of heart and wretched debasement of nature can stifle this passion in the human breast, and stop the power and progress of it. Want of love towards God must argue the grossest degeneracy of principles, the most fatal profligacy of manners.

BUT if love alone does not prevail, a sense of gratitude to our immense Benefactor must have, it should seem, some influence, in recommending and enforcing this duty of obedience. What dissimulation and baseness of soul must it manifest, not to hearken unto the Lord our God, and
to

to serve him faithfully all our days, when we know and “consider how great things he hath done for us?” Ingratitude is an offence the most heinous and detestable. It is in truth a comprehension of the worst of iniquity. Take we good heed therefore to listen to the voice of God and fulfil all his commands, lest we incur the guilt and bring on us the vengeance of a crime, justly deemed the foulest and most malignant. But if the noble sentiments of love are feeble and unavailing; if honour and generosity have no place in our estimation; yet surely those great movements of the human breast, those powerful springs of human actions, our hopes and our fears, must need raise our zeal, and animate our endeavours, and engage our assiduity, in the hearty and steady service of the Almighty.

THE distribution of good and evil is solely in the hands of the Sovereign of

the Universe. To God alone belongs the disposal of our lot, whether it be in this transitory scene of things, or in that unchangeable state which is to ensue. All the blessings, that we have any ground to expect, all the wretchedness that we have any cause to apprehend, must proceed only from the favour or displeasure of our Lord and Governor. What just and cogent reasons these are, for endeavouring with all our power not to forfeit his regard by sinful provocations; but to recommend ourselves to his acceptance by every instance of duty and submission, I need not say. The consciousness alone of this our dependance upon the Almighty for every thing we want to avoid or wish to enjoy, must dispose us to learn his will with studious application, and to execute his commands with zeal and alacrity. A due attention to this our situation and expectancies in life will not suffer the mind to remain indolent and

un-

unaffected. Our hopes and our fears must take the alarm, and rouse the man to a sense of his condition and a solicitude for his future welfare. And when once the heart is thus earnest and intent on our safety and preservation, an anxiety will soon arise how to compass and secure it, and stir us up to every sedulous attempt towards the attainment of it.

Now the best way, indeed the only means to accomplish this weighty concern is a conscientious regard to those several great duties, which the constitution of our nature and the relation, we bear to God and Man, indispensably require at our hands. Only fear the Lord and serve him, is the passionate advice of that great servant of God, and lover of his brethren, the prophet Samuel. And what this divinely authorized person with tenderness and cordiality thus recommends to his own people,
the

the voice of reason loudly proclaims to the whole race of men. A God of purity and righteousness can be only pleased with the holy and virtuous behaviour of his rational creatures. This conduct therefore ought to be the primary care, the palmary business of our lives. To gain the approbation of our Creator must be matter of the most essential interest and nearest concernment to us. It behoves us then to secure this momentous affair, with all speed and with all assiduity. From the good will of Providence alone is to be derived all our expectations of safety and welfare, in this our terrestrial sojourning; and upon his favour and acceptance only must rest all our hopes of blessedness, in those heavenly mansions, which, at the shifting of this earthly scene, are to be disclosed, for ages everlasting.

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DISCOURSE II.

PREACHED AT

THE CHAPEL ROYAL

IN

ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

THE [illegible] [illegible]

OF THE [illegible] [illegible]

IN THE [illegible] [illegible]

AND [illegible] [illegible]

BY [illegible] [illegible]

IN THE [illegible] [illegible]

AND [illegible] [illegible]

BY [illegible] [illegible]

IN THE [illegible] [illegible]

AND [illegible] [illegible]

BY [illegible] [illegible]

IN THE [illegible] [illegible]

AND [illegible] [illegible]

DISCOURSE II.

LUKE II. 10.

— *Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

THE Religion of Christ may justly be styled, as indeed it is, the Gospel of Salvation, glad tidings of great joy to all people. The wants and weakneses of human nature are so very grievous and manifold; such a variety of wretchedness accompanies this state of sin and mortality, that without the friendly guidance and aid of our gracious Creator, we are utterly unable to conduct ourselves through life with safety and with comfort.

A

A strange perverseness of will and slowness of heart to pursue the things belonging to our peace, a fatal propensity to evil, and disinclination to what is good are the common lot of our condition. We are exposed to temptations we know not how to withstand or elude. We are encompassed with calamities, which no wit of man can foresee, no care of man prevent. Through frailty, inadvertence, or presumptuous wilfulness, "in many things we offend all, and fall short of our duty." By our daily provocations we forfeit the good will of Heaven, and incur the displeasure of the Almighty. Nor is there any way nature can suggest to regain the favour of our Maker and extricate ourselves from ensuing misery. And what is the worst evil of all, we are liable every moment to have our accounts closed by the rigid hand of Death, and to be summoned to answer for them, before the righteous Judge of quick and dead.

FROM

FROM what fatal cause this perversion of principles, and this degeneracy of manners is to be derived; what purposes may be served, in God's moral government, by making Man subject to temptation and trouble; what reasons there are either in the counsels of the Almighty, or in the nature and constitution of things, by which he is destined to death and destruction, it concerns not me at this time to inquire. The facts are obvious and uncontestable.

Now under these woeful circumstances, what satisfaction of mind, what gladness of heart must it needs create, to receive a promise of heavenly assistance and consolation; whereby we shall be enabled to tread this vale of misery, without fear or despondency of mind; to have an assurance given, that an unfinning obedience is not exacted from us, that gracious allowances will be made for our transgressions;

ons ; that our pardon is sealed, and our iniquities not to be remembered against us ; that a method is contrived to replace us in the favour of God, and to ensure to us an inheritance of everlasting happiness ; to have the way we are to walk in, and which leadeth directly to the land of bliss, so marked out, as to become the high way of Holiness : “ the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

AND this is the joyful and important news proclaimed to the world, at the appearance of a Saviour, Christ the Lord. This is the use and purpose, which the religion, he came to establish and propagate on earth, was intended to serve. The doctrines, which the Gospel holds forth to the sons of Men, are full of mercy and everlasting comfort. They tend equally to the glory of God, are productive of the peace and welfare of Men, and declarative of

of the good will of our heavenly Father towards us.

CONSIDERATIONS of moment enough, one would think, to recommend them to the favour and approbation of All; or to incline the Rational and the Ingenuous to give them a fair hearing and candid examination; reasons at least sufficient, it should seem, to secure them from the ridicule and outrage of Any. But passion and prejudice are so apt to darken the understanding, and misguide the will of Man, that cavillings and calumnation with some men are wont to assume the place of sound argument and fair inquiry; and the subtleties of recondite sophistry and philosophic refinement are able to overbalance the plainest evidence of reason, and the most powerful demonstrations of the Spirit. What else can be the cause, why a Religion with so fair pretensions, of so benign and lovely an aspect,

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and so fruitful of good effects, should yet meet with opposition and violence?

CHRISTIANITY appeals to the common sense and experience of mankind for its credibility and its truth. The Religion of the Gospel grounds its authority on the attestation of miracle, and the completion of prophecy. A disbelief of the former is utterly ruinous to the faith of History: the latter is verified by things of the most stubborn and durable nature, the Events themselves.

THE simplicity, and the purity of the Gospel institutions and precepts merit still farther our attention and regard. And the end and design of Christianity, so worthy of God, and so beneficial to Man, vindicates the justness of its pretensions.

HEAR what a venerable Apostle has to say in behalf of the authority and pretensions of that Religion, in the defence
and

DISCOURSE II. 49

and propagation of which he sacrificed his life. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; Him being delivered by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*."

HEAR also what a no less respectable and duly-authorized person asserts of the holiness of its doctrines, their important end and beneficial tendency; who from a fierce enemy and furious persecutor became as strenuous an advocate, and as

C 2

powerful

* Acts II.

powerful a friend. "The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*."

BUT we need not trust only to the Evangelists and Apostles for a recommendation of the Religion, they publish: their reports of it are warranted beyond all reasonable doubt, by the best of moral evidence, and the most authentic of all human testimony. Mark what Experience the surest attestation of moral truth witnesseth in its favour. The blessed fruits, which the
Christian

* Titus II. 11—14.

DISCOURSE II. 51

Christian Religion has shed forth abundantly over the face of the earth, and the sudden reformation, which it made among mankind, and which is so justly and frequently boasted of, by the first Apologists of Christianity, are at once an argument of its own importance, and of the veracity of the apostolical asseverations.

WHAT ignorance in matters of Religion, what impurity of morals had got the ascendancy over the minds of Men, even amid those wise and polished nations, where arts and sciences had erected their standard, and established a sovereignty? What barbarous, for instance, and libidinous usages prevailed in the public and private devotion both of Greece and Rome? A worship how unholy and subversive of true religion! Ceremonies and institutions how ludicrous and abominable! How utterly unbecoming the majesty, and derogatory to the honour of God! What

an imputation on the understanding; how much beneath the dignity of Man!

IN truth their Ritual is a standing proof of the impotence of reason in religious concerns, and of the depravity of human nature*. But if among a people so famed for elegance of taste and a cultivation of

* Numerous instances of this kind are upon record, in some of the writers both Greek and Latin in the primitive Church; who with just indignation have set forth in the strongest light the palpable folly and monstrous deformity of that worship, from which they had been lately converted.

Clem. Alex. ΠΡΟΤΡΕΠΤ. Euseb. Præp. Evang. Tertull. Apologet. Arnob. adversus Gentes. Min. Felix. Cyprian. de Idol. Vanitate.

And that no suspicion may remain of their malevolence or disingenuity, which are apt to exaggerate, their representations are authorized by two grave writers among the Pagans themselves, a Philosopher, and an Historian. Cic. de Divin. II. Diodor. Sic. Hist. I.

Nay the indignity, which human nature suffered from the Gentile worship, was so flagrant and detestable, that an honest Pagan poet could not refrain from exposing the foolishness and absurdity of it, with all the rage and ridicule of Satyr, whose account, abominable as it is, stands confirmed by undoubted testimony. Juv. Sat. xv. Herod. Hist. II.

mind,

mind, there was so little saving knowledge, where yet appeared the strongest efforts of reason in Policy and Literature; what was to be expected from the Uncivilized and the Savage? What indeed else, as is evident in fact, but the grossest errors, and the most deplorable superstition *?

OBSERVE how great a change has been wrought in the religious notions and moral principles of men by the promulgation of the Gospel? What new hopes and uncommon comfort have been ad-

* Lamentable accounts are transmitted to us of the horrid Barbarism and shocking Impiety, that prevails in the religious worship of the modern Pagans in Africa, America, and the Indian Isles, by the Compilers of Modern History, and the Writers of Voyages and Travels into the territories of the Savages. And we have the more reason to believe their reports, as they are delivered with an uniformity in this point, though with strange diversity in other respects.

Nor are the polite and civilized Empires of China and Japan, exempt from the imputation of monstrous Idolatry in their sacred offices. Description de l' Empire de la Chine par le Pere Du Halde. Kämpfer's Hist. of Japan.

ministered? What a solid foundation is laid of peace and content? What a never failing spring of happiness is opened for the sons of Men?

WE are informed of the God, whom we are called upon to serve, that as all things at first did owe their very being to the word of his power; so they do derive altogether their continuance and preservation from his wisdom and goodness. We are instructed, that all things obey his will, and are made subservient to the purposes of his providence; that as his knowledge reacheth to the thoughts no less than the lives of men; so both the inward workings of the Mind and the outward operations of Nature are within the extent of his power and dominion.

WE are told that this great Lord of the Universe is as righteous as he is holy, and will assuredly render to every man

ac-

according to his deeds. What firm foundation for religious awe and reverence? What solid reason for confidence and resignation? What sure ground of consolation? What stable support, in every distressful scene of human life? What a magnificent and yet amiable picture of the Deity? How widely different from those unworthy representations of his nature and government in the Pagan Systems! There every thing is either put under the blind direction of Chance, or determined and fixed irreversibly by the necessity of Fate*. There the Majesty of Heaven is either left in a state of indolence and inaction, utterly regardless of what passes in this sublunary scene of things, lest perchance the concerns of the world should prove bur-

* These two Systems of the Pagans differ more in words than in reality. A necessary series of events, absolutely resulting from a necessary concatenation of causes and effects, independent of all voluntary interpositions, must prevail in them both. And so indeed they have been represented by a celebrated Ancient. Cic. Lib. de Fato.

densome and distracting, and a multiplicity of cares give disturbance to his quiet†; or else the Divine Nature is made the ruthless creature of superstition, armed with cruelty and terror, whose tender relentings would be deemed a certain want of dignity, and whose mercifulness would be degraded into weakness and folly‡.

† Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longè.
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
Ipsa suis pollens rebus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

Lucret. de Rerum Nat. I. 57—62.

This opinion has been animadverted upon with due severity, and exposed with proper ridicule and contempt by the great Philosopher of Rome. Nihil habet, inquit, negotii. Profecto Epicurus, quasi pueri delicati, nihil cessatione melius existimat. At ipsi tamen pueri, etiam cùm cessant, exercitatione aliquâ ludicrâ delectantur. Deum sic feriatum volumus cessatione torpere, ut si se commoverit, vereamur beatus esse non possit. Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 36, 37.

‡ That this was one of the strange dogmata of the Stoics, is asserted by Diogenes Laertius in the life of the Founder of the Sect. And the same thing is averred by the Roman Orator in a public place of Judicature, and that in the presence of a very rigid disciple of that School, Cato himself. Cic. in Orat. pro Murænâ.

WE are taught to pay our adoration, where only it can be due, to God alone; and that not with the vain pomp of procession and sacrifice; not with ostentatious offerings and impure ceremonies; not with the service of the lip and outward man, but with simplicity and godly sincerity, with the worship of the spirit, with inward sanctity and the devotion of the heart. How dissimilar this to the multifarious and extravagant forms of idolatrous worship, to the revellings and indecency, that so universally prevailed, to the everlasting reproach of the Gentile world* !

THE

* The multiform and ridiculous worship of the Gentiles is fully exposed by Lilius Gyraldus in his History of their Gods and sacrifices, which is meant, as he observes himself, *Deorum Gentilium nomina et cognomina non tam interpretari, quam ridere vanitatem.* Hist. Deor. Syntag. I.

And the exhibition of some of their sacred Festivals and religious Rites, to the notorious offence of modesty, is reprehended with justice and acrimony by Lactantius. *Divin. Instit. I. II.*

The

THE improvement made by the Gospel in the moral principles of Men is evident beyond dispute. To know the chief good of Man, to discover what is the leading principle of moral conduct are things of the first and nearest concern to Mankind. They are things indeed of such vast importance, that on them alone depends our peace and welfare. They are things, without which all philosophy is impertinent study and vain speculation; all reasonings on the nature of virtue and condition of Man are idle and unavailing; all explanations of duty must need lose their main use and influence.

The Lupercalia and Floralia, the Bacchanalian Revels and Eleusinian Mysteries were matter of public scoff and scandal. No wonder then such kind of riot and indecorum did not suit the gravity of Cato. The Epigram in Martial is as bitter a reflection on such like practices, as it is a severe sarcasm on the conduct of the Stoic.

*Nosces jocosæ dulce cùm Sacrum Floræ
Festosque lusus, et licentiam Vulgi,
Cur in Theatrum Cato severe venisti?
An ideò tantùm veneras, ut exires? Epigram. I. 3.*

AC-

ACCORDINGLY as was to be expected, these have been subjects, that have for ever exercised the wits both of Ancient and Modern Sages, and become matter of endless contention. But after all their researches and altercation, nothing has been struck out for general edification. Whatever has been advanced, has been either too subtle and abstracted for the comprehension of the generality of Men, and only fitted to the capacity of a few refined spirits; or has wanted sanction and authority to influence the heart of Individuals. It has rather proved matter of curiosity and amusement to the Understanding, than a thing of any force or sway on the Will.

WHEREAS the Christian law proposes a principle, simple, plain, and rational, a principle of universal extent and influence, level to the apprehension, and reaching to the heart of every Mortal, in every condition,

dition, and under every circumstance of his being.

THE Gospel declares it to be the will of our Maker, that we should practise those great rules of moral duty, which Nature and Reason have marked out to us; the due performance of which by honest endeavour and assiduous application, he expects at our hands, as the indispensable condition of our present and future happiness. To please God therefore is the chief good of Man, and the knowledge of his will that grand principle, whence alone our obligation to duty is to be deduced.

BUT the superiour excellence and great expediency of the Gospel-revelation is in nothing more apparent, than in furnishing us with such new grounds of hope and consolation, as cannot fail to give the fairest prospect of happiness in this life,
and

and the joyful assurance of blessedness in that which is to come.

WHAT was in vain to be sought for in the regions of Philosophy; what the religion of Nature can give us no security in, that deficiency has been amply supplied by the Gospel of Jesus; I mean, a remedy for sin, and a title to an everlasting inheritance in the heavenly mansions. The transgressions of Man make so wide a breach between him and his Maker, as no labour of his own can ever be able to repair. They are not only a forfeiture of the good will and protection of Heaven, but an exposure to the indignation and vengeance of the Almighty.

IN this wretched situation what is there within the reach of Nature or the wit of Man, that can be of any real service to us? What is there that can avert the displeasure of God, and replace us in his favour and accept-

acceptance? Can Sacrifice, that slender refuge of the Pagan? Or can repentance, that feeble, tho' only resort of the Unbeliever? "Can the blood of bulls or of goats, as the Prophet well expostulates, or the sprinkling of an heifer wash away sin? Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts, saith the Lord?" How indeed in the nature of the thing should the life of a Brute animal be an atonement for the guilt of Man? how can it be thought that the righteous Lord of heaven and earth should accept the one in lieu of the other? And how can mere sorrow wipe off the stains and pollutions of sin, and compensate for past offences? Or how can the resolution of amendment for the future, or the performance of duty in one instance, be sufficient to answer for the violation or neglect of it in another?

BUT if our evil doings are still chargeable upon us; if the demerit of our actions,
for

DISCOURSE II. 63

for ought we can do, must ever remain; if we can find no method to remove the just cause of God's wrath against us; how shall we be able to merit his favour, and gain a title to reward at his hands? The best services of the best of men fall short of their duty. "When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants:" we do but ill repay the care and goodness of our Master. The reward of the most perfect obedience on the part of Man is only to be hoped for, from the mercy and gracious allowances of our Lord and Governour. If then the righteous can thus scarcely expect to avoid condemnation, what must become of the ungodly and the sinner?

Now the Gospel has provided a sovereign remedy against all fear in the one case; and given sufficient ground of confidence and security in the other. It not only has ensured our pardon and recon-

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cilement

cilement with God; but even rendered our imperfect services meritorious in his sight. The blood of Jesus is become a propitiation for our sins, and the merits of Christ have entitled us to the reward of Heaven. By faith in our Redeemer, his righteousness is imputable to us, and we are made "the sons of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Privileges surely of the highest estimation and regard to the sons of Men; as they are privileges of the greatest note and dignity in themselves, and of the last importance to our welfare.

WELL may we then be encouraged by the Christian Covenant not to fear; well may it be called glad tidings of great joy to all people. As the Death and Passion of its great Author is the accomplishment of our Salvation; so his Resurrection from the Dead is the completion of our trust and joy.

BUT

BUT it must be always remembered on our part with great care and attention, that the meritoriousness of this Sacrifice of Christ is only available to salvation, upon our faith and our obedience. The Gospel-covenant contains a promise of blessings, great indeed and extensive beyond conception, but only to be conveyed to us upon the stipulations therein specified and prescribed.

WE must have faith in God and faith in Christ; not that faith which rests in the understanding alone, without moving the will or affecting the heart; not that faith, which the wild Enthusiast inculcates with so much confidence and presumption, which the wicked and the profligate may have, and yet not relinquish their iniquities, and which even the evil Spirits themselves do entertain with fear and trembling; but that faith, which operates on the mind of Man, with the force of con-

66 DISCOURSE II.

viſtion, and with the ſenſe of duty ; with an entire aſſent to the truth of the Goſpel, and with a full truſt in the promiſes of God, accompanied with a ſincere regard to his moſt holy Laws.

THIS is the faith which St. Paul preached with ſo much fervour and earneſtneſs of heart, and recommended in his writings with ſuch a true ſpirit of manly eloquence. And it was the miſapprehenſion and perverſion alone of this faith, which St. James ſets himſelf to correct, with ſo much godly zeal.

WE are commanded by our Religion to have faith in Chriſt ; for faith alone will ſave a Man ; while at the ſame time we are told, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord, and are therefore ſtrictly enjoined to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling.

WHAT-

DISCOURSE II. 67

WHATEVER then be the vain boast of Those, who pretend to trust in faith alone, without the conduct of a good life ; let us embrace with more truth and soberness the faith of the Gospel, both as a principle of Knowledge, and as a principle of Religion. The former will teach us what we ought to believe : the latter will dispose us to act up to that persuasion ; but both of them together can only make us truly wise, “ even wise unto Salvation.”

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DISCOURSE III.

PREACHED AT

THE CHAPEL ROYAL

IN

ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

JANUARY 1, 1891

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION

PASSED BY THE SENATE

APRIL 1, 1890

ALBANY:

JOHN B. LANE, PRINTER.

1891.

DISCOURSE III.

PSALM XXXVII. 37.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace:

Or,

as it is in the Translation of the Septuagint, that is used in our Liturgy:

Keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace at the last.

HAPPINESS is the great object, to which the voice of reason directs, and the calls of nature urge the studies
and

and pursuits of all Mankind. How diverse soever and incompatible in themselves, the several designs and attempts of men may be, yet the end and tendency of them all is the same. Indeed as the complexions of men differ, as the manner of their education and their condition of life varies, so will their notions and sentiments vary in proportion. And accordingly their dispositions and endeavours must take a different cast and turn. But still the principal thing sought after and aimed at, with so much incessant industry and application, is only happiness. Here unite the principles and the practices, how discordant soever they are, of the Religious and the Libertine, of the Recluse and the Sociable, of the High and Wealthy, as well as of the Mean and Indigent. The sordid views of the Avaricious, the unmanly taste of pleasure in the Voluptuary, and the insatiable thirst of glory in the Ambitious, into whatever cross paths and indirect roads

roads they may be led thereby, all terminate in this *.

IT becomes then matter of common concern and of the nearest importance, to be able to ascertain, wherein consisteth the happiness of Man, and by what methods it may be most effectually attained and secured.

CONSIDERATIONS well worthy the closest attention and most strict scrutiny

* This matter has been finely and philosophically explained, by our much admired Poet, with his wonted strength of sentiment and beauty of diction, from that Ruling Passion in the human breast; which reconciles all the contrarieties in human conduct; and which, as it varies in the individuals of the human species, gives a different determination to their thoughts and actions, and induces the different colour of their lives. Pope's *Ethic. Epist. II. § 3.*

From the same principle is deducible that diversity of Sects in the philosophical schools of the Ancients; and that dissension in the Disciples of Zeno, Epicurus, and Aristotle, concerning the *summum bonum* of Man. Cicero de *Finibus. Quæst. Academ.*

of

of Man; those things indeed alone of greatest moment, which either reason can teach or religion can propose. And these are the weighty points, to which we are at once led, by the instruction in the Text. "Keep innocency and take heed to the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

IT has ever been the main business and purport of Philosophy, to investigate the chief good of Man. The Sages of old, bestowed great labour upon this subject; but were miserably divided in their opinions about it. The researches of modern times have been laid out upon the same Topic, with as much care and pains; and yet with no less dissension and variety of sentiment. Endless have been the disputes, and innumerable the Sects and Parties, which this interesting truth has occasioned in the world*.

AND

* The multiplicity of opinions and discordancy of sentiment, that raised so much contest and animosity

DISCOURSE III. 75

AND yet the case appears extreamly plain and obvious; what requireth no stretch of understanding to discover; what needs no depth and compass of learning to explain and prove. The common notions and feelings of mankind abundantly shew, what are the essential ingredients, in the composition of human happiness. Whatever is productive of solid and lasting peace to the mind of Man; which neither the sun-shine of prosperity can dispel and dissipate, nor the storms of adversity can cloud and overwhelm; which does not desert the bed of sickness, and forsaketh not the infirmities of age; which can never be separated from the enjoyments of youth, nor the cares of manhood; which leaves us not forlorn and destitute, in those last gloomy moments,

mosity amongst the ancient Philosophers are exhibited to the derision of the learned world by a wise Pagan Writer of much erudition, and by two learned ones amongst the Primitive Christians. Cicero de Finibus. Quæst. Academ. August. de Civitate Dei. Lactant. Divin. Inst. III.

when

when all outward comforts fail, That it is, and That Alone, which can render us truly happy. Whatever expedients Ancient Wisdom may suggest, or Modern Philosophy can recommend, that fall short of this; they are utterly vain and insignificant.

WHAT availeth it, to tell a Man, that in order to be happy, he must divest himself of passion, and get above the sense of pain and sorrow*; when he finds vehement cravings of nature, not to be subdu-

* It has been observed, and I think, with great justice, that there is no doctrine so strange and absurd, but what has met with some Knight-Errant in ancient Philosophy for its Champion, who has pertinaciously defended it with all zeal and fury.

A more flagrant proof of this truth scarce occurs than the Stoical Apathy: a tenet so absolutely beyond the power of human nature, and so utterly contrary to common sense and experience. Cic. Tusc. Disp. II. IV.

The great usefulness of the passions under proper direction, and the foolishness of that conceit of exterminating them from the breast of Man is demonstrated with much elegance and judgement in the Essay on Man. Pope's Ethic. Epist. II. ver. 100—132.

ed,

ed, violent emotions of soul, not to be avoided; when he feels from within fearful misgivings of heart and dejection of spirit, and experiences from without un-intermitting racks and torture of body? What will it signify, to bid a man, eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies; to take his fill of sensual delights; “for this is his portion, and his lot is this; when anguish seizes his mind, and his soul is full of bitterness; when disease and infirmity surround him on every side; and he sees Nature itself just tumbling into ruins? What does it profit, to read a man fine lessons, on the abstracted nature and innate beauty of disinterested virtue, when he perceives his days are ending in misery, and he has no joyful expectation of any recompence beyond the grave?

NOTHING most assuredly can be a firm and durable foundation for human happiness, but what is laid in such stable materials,

rials, as will make a man Live with delight and satisfaction, and Die full of joy and consolation; as will furnish his breast with those steady and powerful principles, that can enable him to live in peace with God, in peace with himself, in peace with all the world, and give him reason to leave this earthly tabernacle in full expectation of future blessedness. And this is only to be compassed; it is indeed no otherwise attainable, but by innocence of life and rectitude of conduct, by keeping a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards Man, and by performing the great duties of piety, and justice, and sobriety.

As the first part of wisdom is to be free from folly*, so the leading step to happiness, is to be devoid of misery. No affliction can be more severe and unfurmount-

* Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima Stultitiâ caruisse. —

Hor. Lib. I. Epist. I. 41.

able, than the painful reflections of a guilty mind. Our first care then must be, to keep all quiet at home, to have the approbation and encouragement of conscience, as a friend and counsellour, rather than the anger and resentment of it, as a judge and avenger.

WHEN a Man's heart reproacheth him not, his days will be full of peace and satisfaction; and when all within is calm and serene, it matters not what turbulencies are abroad in the world. He will always have such a support, from the consciousness of his own innocence, as will put him in a condition, to behold outward commotions, undismayed and without concern. But when guilt once overtakes a Man, fear and sorrow will be his inseparable attendants. He must perpetually live under the torment of secret anguish, and every accident and calamity of life will possess his soul with wretchedness. He can

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never

never think himself secure from the violence and harm of his fellow-creatures, and will be continually harraſſed with the dread of Divine vengeance.

Now what worldly bleſſings and enjoyments, under theſe direful circumſtances, can prevent us from being miſerable? All the ſweets of life will loſe their reliſh, under this ſmart and agony of mind, and while the ſoul thus refuseth comfort, wealth and proſperity will only aggravate our miſery.

BUT a man has gone but a little way in the path of virtue, has made but ſmall advances towards the way of happineſs, who only doeth no harm. To be barely innocent is but ſlight merit and ſlender comfort.

IF we would have our happineſs as compleat, as the frailties and caſualties of this
life

DISCOURSE III. 81

life will admit, we must follow the advice of the Prophet: we must not only "cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well." We must be perfect and live in peace, and then according to the Apostle, "we may be of good comfort. The God of love and peace will dwell with us." If we mean to have our days end in peace, we must be upright as well as perfect. Our conduct is not only to be free from blemishes, but it must be full of excellencies. And this is to be done only by the uniform practice of the great rules of Moral Duty, by living soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

THE Scriptures have given us assurance, that "he who lusteth to live and would fain see good days, must eschew evil and do good, seek peace and ensue it." We are there encouraged, to expect the blessings of God upon all our endeavours, to be secure from harm in our persons, and suc-

cessful in our fortunes, "if we be followers of that which is good." We are told, not to hope for the enjoyments of life, not to think of "seeing good days, unless we do good and refrain from evil. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are only open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them, that do evil. There is no peace, faith my God, to the Wicked."

AND to this our own reason beareth undeniable testimony. Whatever is agreeable to our rational nature must be productive of peace and happiness. For what is happiness, but to be in that state and condition of life, which the constitution and circumstances of our Being requireth, and the Author of our nature designed?

THE Sect most renowned for wisdom among the Ancients clearly saw this, and maintained accordingly, that the chief good
of

of man consisteth, in acting according to Nature, and living suitably to the condition and circumstances of our Being*. The nature and reason of things point out to us the several relations, in which we stand to other beings, and from these several relations do result the respective duties, we owe to God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves. Now what is thus conformable to the dictates of our own breasts, neither biased by prejudice, nor misled by passion, will have the approbation and applause of our minds, and must end in great joy of heart and complacency of soul.

A sense of duty and religion is the peculiar excellence of man, and what sets us above the level of the Brute-creation.

*Secundum naturam, id est, naturæ congruenter convenienterque vivere, hoc his (sc. Stoicis) bonorum videtur extremum. Cic. de Fin. IV. 10. Seneca. Epist. 118.

Finis bonorum existit, secundum naturam vivere, sic adfectum, ut optimè adfici possit ad naturamque accommodatissime. Cic. de Fin. V. 9.

They want not reason and sagacity, to secure their beings, and provide for their welfare, any more than we do; and the bodily sensations are as exquisite, nay, even more so in some of them, than our own*. But to reflect on the nature and consequences of their actions, to consider themselves as accountable for their conduct to some superiour Being, upon whose power and goodness they depend for their existence and their happiness, is a reach of thought far above their apprehension and capacity. It is indeed the privilege of Man alone, in this earthly state of things,

*What modes of Sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The Mole's dim curtain, and the Lynx's beam:
Of Smell, the headlong Lioness between,
And Hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of Hearing, from the Life that fills the flood,
To That, which warbles thro' the vernal wood:
The Spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives upon the line:
In the nice Bee, what sense so subtly true,
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
Pope's Essay on Man. Ep. I. 211.—220.

To

TO keep up then the dignity of human nature, by acting according to that sense of religion and duty, with which Providence has distinguished us in so singular a manner, as it is the highest accomplishment and perfection of Man, so it must needs be his greatest happiness.

SOME of the wisest Heathens taught this lesson, that a conformity to the Divine nature, in the moral perfections of it, is the utmost excellence and happiness of Man*. And herein they instructed rightly. For what more compleat happiness can be devized, than the imitation of those attributes, which constitute the all-sufficiency of the most perfect of Beings?

WE are informed upon the best authority, that of the Holy Scriptures, the great

* Diog. Laert. Porphy. in Vit. Pythagoræ. Εὐ γὰρ δὴ ὁ ἀποφηνάμενος, τὶ Θεοῖς ὅμοιον ἔχοιμεν, εὐεργεσίαν εἶπε καὶ ἀλήθειαν. Longin. περὶ ΤΥΟΤΣ. §. I.

store-house of all saving knowledge, that Man was at first formed in the image and likeness of his Maker; which similitude of Man to God could lye in nothing else, but the purity and rectitude of his mind, in the simplicity of his manners, and the integrity of his life. It must be therefore the highest pitch of glory and happiness, to live up, as far as the capacity of human nature will admit, to that Divine original.

To stand approved in the eye of our all-perfect Creator, is the most exalted degree of perfection and happiness, to be obtained by us. Whatever therefore will recommend us to the favour and approbation of God, and put us under the notice and protection of the Almighty, cannot fail of bringing with it ever-lasting peace and comfort. But a Being of infinite purity and righteousness cannot but delight in virtue and holiness, and whatever has
his

his countenance and favour, must be both our duty and our happiness.

THIS is another forcible reason, why we should betake ourselves with all sedulity to the performance of every part of true righteousness; since we may be confident, that whatever merits the Divine regard, will assuredly partake of the Divine blessedness,

THE truth of this train of reasoning is warranted and confirmed by undoubted experience. A virtuous and religious life is sure to be attended with inward peace and joy unspeakable, and in the general order and course of nature is very fruitful of outward comfort and worldly blessings. It will make a Man happy in himself, happy in his connexions with the rest of his fellow-creatures, and happy in the interest he has formed, and the friendship

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ship he has established with the great Lord of all things.

THERE is an inseparable connexion between Holiness and Happiness, Sin and Misery, and that founded in the very nature of things themselves. A course of temperance preserves our health, maintains the full vigour both of mind and body, and gives a true relish to all worldly enjoyments. Whereas all sorts of intemperance weaken the constitution, impair all our faculties, indispose a Man for the discharge of the duties of his station, and bring on at last a long train of maladies and misfortunes. Justice and Charity have a natural tendency to advance our reputation, to encrease our fortunes, and to gain the esteem and friendship of all around us. On the contrary, the unjust and the uncharitable cannot but meet with reproach and contempt, hatred and vexation; neither can the ordinary means of
security

security in a social state sufficiently guard either their persons or their property from violence and injury. Piety and Religion never fail of producing a sincere trust in God, and a filial confidence in his favour, which always fill the mind with a certain degree of satisfaction and exultation, beyond expression. But impiety and profaneness necessarily create in us fear, distrust, and uneasiness of mind, bring on in the end a strange dejection of Spirit, and cast a melancholy gloom upon every scene of life.

BUT this is not all. There is still behind a copious source of endless peace and comfort, which neither the capriciousness of fortune nor the maliciousness of men, which no accidents or calamities of life can ever rob us of, which will administer fresh cordial to our drooping spirits, in that last and severest of all human tryals, the hour of death, and carry
us

us through the agony of it, with patience and resignation; and That is the consideration, that the happy effects of religion and virtue extend themselves beyond the grave, and will secure to us an everlasting bliss.

HOWEVER gracious the appointments of Heaven may be to the sons of men in general, however wisely the righteous laws of God may be contrived for the good and happiness of All; yet either through the untoward circumstances of Some and the cross posture of their affairs, or through the perverse and evil disposition of Others, in particular cases it may and does happen that virtue is oppressed, and vice triumphant.

THIS distressful situation of the Virtuous would be apt to blast at once all hopes of comfort here below, to break down the spirit of a man with a load of remedyless

less adversity and leave his soul in a state of wretchedness, if left to itself hopeless and unsupported. But the sense of God's favour and the thoughts of a future retribution, which the consciousness of a well-spent life must naturally suggest, will afford such a consolation, as to enable us to bear up manfully, with courage and resolution, in the worst of misfortunes, and under the forest of afflictions.

IN truth the force of these religious considerations has been found in fact so prevailing and effectual, as to make men sit easy and unconcerned in the midst of calamity; to despise the insolence of Tyrants, and disregard the threats of cruelty; nay, even to be joyful under the torture of the executioner, to smile at the stake, and triumph in the flames.

HERE then we have abundant cause to admire the goodness of God, and the
kind

kind dispensations of his providence. He has made our interest our duty. The observance of all his holy laws is for our real good and welfare. Such is the frame and constitution of man within, such is the contrivance and disposition of things without, that in the ordinary and regular course of Nature, honour, profit, and pleasure are the constant companions of Virtue, ignominy, mischief, and pain the inseparable attendants on Wickedness.

IF therefore we would preserve the tranquillity of our minds, and have our days end happily; if we are desirous of passing, (and pass we must) through the valley of the shadow of death, without reluctance and concern; if we wish to have a fair prospect opened unto us, in the Heavenly regions of eternal happiness, we must keep Innocency, and take heed to the thing that is Right; for whatever other means of felicity our own vain imaginations may form, ei-
ther

DISCOURSE III. 93

ther from the flattering glories of the world, or from the gay blandishments of pleasure, or from the deceitful lusts of the flesh, it is purity of life and integrity of manners ; it is a conscientious discharge of our duty both to God and our Neighbour ; it is This, and This only, that will bring a man Peace at the last.

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DISCOURSE IV.

PREACHED AT
THE CHAPEL ROYAL
IN
KENSINGTON PALACE.

DISCOURSE IV

THE FOUNDATION

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY BASIS OF THE CHURCH'S EXISTENCE AND GROWTH.

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DISCOURSE IV.

JOHN XVI. 33.

—In the world Ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

THE great importance of the Christian Revelation is in nothing more apparent, than in those comfortable assurances, which it gives to the Religious and the Good, under the many severe tryals of human life. The calamities and misery of mankind have become matter of loud complaint in all ages of the world. This has been the cause of great murmurings and presumption in some men, of wretched lamentation and despondency in
F 2 others.

others. To the Wicked and the Unbeliever it has ever given occasion to blame and question an over-ruling Providence; and it has sometimes raised doubt and perplexity, in the minds of the Virtuous and the Faithful. The whole storehouse of reason has been ransacked with great labour and industry, for a solution of this difficulty; and all the regions of Philosophy have been carefully sought and curiously surveyed, to provide a remedy against the fundry evils of life.

THE investigation and establishment of this one point was the main purport and tendency of the various and undeterminable contentions amongst the Ancient Sages, concerning the chief good of Man. Some of them, to satisfy the cravings of nature, and thereby, it should seem, to perpetuate a tranquillity of mind, had recourse to sensual gratifications, and were thereby led to work all uncleanness with
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greediness*. Fatal mistake! The very method made use of to guard against the mighty

* Quorum tandem bonorum? Voluptatum credo, nempe ad corpus pertinentium: nullam enim novistis, nisi profectam à corpore, et redeuntem ad corpus, animi voluptatem. Non arbitror te, Vellei, similem esse Epicureorum reliquorum, quos pudeat earum Epicuri vocum, quibus ille testatur, se nè intelligere quidem ullum bonum, quod sit junctum à delicatis et obscœnis voluptatibus, quas quidem non erubescens persequitur omnes nominatim. Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 40.

Istisne fidentes somniis non modo Epicurus et Metrodorus et Hermachus contra Pythagoram, Platonem, Empedoclemque dixerunt, sed Meretricula etiam Leontium contra Theophrastum scribere ausa est? scito illa quidem sermone et Attico: sed tamen — Tantum Epicuri hortus habuit licentiæ! Ibid. 33. et de Fin. II. 3. et de Off. III. 33. Plut. adv. Colotem.

Gassendus indeed has endeavoured to apologize for Epicurus; but with all his studious pains and extensive learning he has not been able to clear his Philosophy of this shameful imputation. The gardens of this professed Voluptuary stand still chargeable with it, in the judgment of the Impartial. This doubtless admits of no palliation, even from Candour itself. The summum bonum of Epicurus is made to consist of a negative and a positive part; of an ἀναλγησία, vacuitas doloris or indolentia according to Cicero upon this subject; and of an ἡδονή or pleasure.

Now as ἀναλγησία by his own confession implied freedom from the pains of the body as well as of the mind;

mighty ills of life terminated in pain, and became in itself ruinous to human nature. Others with more becoming dignity indeed, but not with less culpable error involved themselves in the thin and defenceless garb of mere rigid virtue, unconnected with private interest or any selfish consideration, and tried to harden themselves into a state of insensibility. Fond imagination! to think of altering the workmanship of Nature, and that the shadowy form of Virtue, unattended and unsupported, is security enough

mind: so *ἡδονή* must fairly be understood to comprehend sensual no less than mental pleasure. Gassendus de Vita et Moribus Epicuri.

* That excellent writer, who taught Philosophy to speak with Roman elegance, was truly sensible of this, and makes this ingenuous confession; *Si ab his inventa et perfecta Virtus est, et si præsidium ad beatè vivendum in virtute satis est, quis est, qui non præclarè et ab illis positam, et à nobis susceptam operam philosophandi arbitretur? Sin autem Virtus subjecta sub varios incertosque casus formula Fortunæ est; nec tantarum virium est, ut seipsa tueatur; vereor, nè non tam virtutis fiduciâ nitendum nobis ad spem beatè vivendi, quàm vota facienda videantur. Equidem eos casus, in quibus me Fortuna vehementer exercuit, mecum ipse considerans*

enough against the plagues and the malignancy of evil*. Others again sensible of this defect, and determined, one may fairly suppose, to be compleatly armed against the force of every calamity incident to man, have endeavoured to make amends by a wordly substitute, by joining a com-

derans huic incipio sententiæ diffidere; interdum et humani generis imbecillitatem fragilitatemque extimescere. Cic. Tusc. Disp. V. 1.

The Roman Satyrift, no contemptible judge of human nature, testifies the same thing:

—Quis enim Virtutem amplectitur ipsam
Præmia si tollas—— Juv. Sat. X. 141.

We need not wonder then at the violent exclamation of the desponding and dying Brutus, upon the unsuccessfulness of his fortune: “Oh! wretched Virtue! then hast thou proved a mere name! I practised thee indeed as something real; but thou hast been the slave of Fortune:” — Sed quanto efficacior est Fortuna quam Virtus! et quam verum est, quod moriens (sc. Brutus) efflavit, non in re, sed in verbo tantum esse Virtutem. Flor. IV. 7.

Ο ὦν Βρυττός——ἀπογνὼς μὲν τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἀπαξιώ-
σας δὲ τὴν ἄλωσιν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον καὶ αὐτὸς κατέφυγε· καὶ
ἀναβοήσας τῷτο δὴ Ηράκλειον,

Ω τλήμων Αρετὴ λόγῳ ἄρ' ἦδ'. Εγὼ δέ σε

Ως ἔργου ἥσκαυ· Σὺ δ' ἄρ' ἐδέλευες Τύχῃ·

Παρέκαλεσέ τινα ἱὼν συνόντων, ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀποκλείνῃ.

Dion. Hist. Rom. XLVII. 49.

petency of external goods to the excellence, or what is reckoned in the estimation of others, the self-sufficiency of virtue. Poor compensation ! while at the same time are left out of the account the encouragements and assistances of Heaven, and a regard to the future recompence of Religion.

BUT however these things be, which it is not my business at this time to discuss, they are a plain acknowledgment of the powerfulness of evil, and a fruitless attempt to sustain a man under the pressure of adversity.

AND Indeed it must be confessed, the complaints of men, concerning the prevalence of evil in the world, are not without foundation in reason and nature. Experience bears undoubted testimony to the truth and justness of them; and this experience is not unwarranted by the authority of Revelation, The condition of man, from his very entrance into life to the
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the time of his dissolution, is perpetually exposed to maladies and misfortunes. In no part of life are we free from the danger of calamities, which no human wisdom can foresee, nor any care and prudence of our own obstruct. For a great part of life we are unhappily labouring under the heavy load and torment of them. So true in fact is that observation in the Scripture: "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward*." This latter effect in the Natural world does not more arise from an established law of the Visible System, than the former does in the Moral from the very constitution of Man, and the circumstances of his Being.

NEITHER is this reflection of Eliphaz a malevolent exaggeration of the misery of human life. The same thing is attested by the united voice of the Sacred Writers. Those authorized and respectable in-

* Job v. 7.

interpreters of the nature of Man and of the will of Heaven insist largely on the infirmities, the casualties, and the miseries of human life.

NAY, these very things are oftentimes made the ground and reason of their precepts and exhortations. It is to these instances particularly, that Christ himself appeals for the great use and excellence of his own religion. "In the world Ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

THIS was undoubtedly true, and that in an eminent degree, of the first teachers of our holy Religion. The history of those times is full of the barbarous insults, the shocking persecutions and the unheard-of cruelties, which the Apostles and primitive Disciples of Christ underwent, in the promulgation of the Gospel; and of that wonderful spirit of patience and intrepidity,

trepidity, with which those holy men unconquerably stood their ground, and bravely triumphed over all malice and opposition, to the lasting reproach and infamy of their enemies, and to their own immortal honour, and to the standing glory of the Christian Religion*.

* The history of the Church has drawn out a glorious army of Martyrs, whom no terrors of persecution could alarm, nor the whole force of cruelty subdue; who died with serenity and unshaken constancy amidst the direst and most horrid tortures, that the wit or rage of Man could invent. Fox's Martyrology, B. I. Lactant. Divin. Inst. V. August. de Civ. Dei. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. passim. Orosius, passim.

And their accounts are confirmed by the Heathens themselves. Tac. Annal. XV. 44. Plin. Epist. ad Trajanum.

Indeed a famous Antiquarian amongst the Moderns has laboured much to diminish the number of Martyrs in the primitive Church, and to reduce the glorious Catalogue by some fanciful conjectures on the reputed multitude of Martyrdoms. Dodwel Diff. Cyprianic. XI. de Paucitate Martyrum.

But this opinion has been judiciously and learnedly refuted and exploded by two able Moderns, a Catholic and a Protestant, who unite in the subversion of this singular hypothesis. Ruinart. Præfat. in Acta Martyrum. Basnage Annal. Politico-Ecclest. Vol. I. p. 807. §. 6—12.

BUT

BUT the words of this Text may be understood of the Professors of the Christian Religion, in every other period of the Church; and in this sense are equally applicable to Ourselves. We as well as Those, who are gone before us, must expect to meet with tribulation. But let this be our comfort; we are furnished with such provisions and supports from the Religion we profess, as will enable us to bear up manfully against all tribulation, and by our firmness and magnanimity effectually to overcome the world.

IT were needless to shew, that in the world we shall have tribulation. For who is there among the sons of Men, that is not sensible of the power and extent of worldly calamity. Misfortune never faileth to break in upon the repose, and to ruin the enjoyments of every scene of life; and reacheth unto the ends of the earth. Misfortune knoweth no distinction of persons.

Dignity

Dignity of station is no sufficient guard against it. Meanness and indigence cannot plead an immunity. It entereth the Palace as well as the Cottage, and bears an uncontrollable sway through every condition of life. Nor riches, nor honours, nor pleasures can afford a Man any security. The Christian no less than the Jew and Gentile feel and lament the sad effects of it. For misfortune lordeth it without restraint over all God's heritage, and layeth it waste continually.

IN plain truth, trouble and misery are the common lot of Mortality. Nature doth not permit; Providence did not design, that man should have an exemption from the evils of life. So far from it: the constitution of Man and the very circumstances of our Being subject us perpetually to frailties, to accidents, to affliction. And there are very wise and important purposes served, in God's moral government of the world,

world, by this appointment and disposition of things.

INSTEAD therefore of dwelling upon this dark side of human nature, puzzling our heads with difficulties, perplexing our thoughts with doubts, and loading our breasts with complaints and sorrow; let us rather look up to the kind Author of our Being, and our most gracious Redeemer, with hearts full of love, and gratitude, and joy, for dispelling this thick gloom of melancholy, that is apt to hang over us, by the comfortable influence, which his Religion has shed abundantly over the whole face of the Christian world,

IN our Christian warfare we are to meet with difficulties, and dangers, and trouble. But let us not therefore be discouraged, in this our glorious enterprize. If we behave like good and faithful soldiers
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of Jesus, and boldly and resolutely follow, as the great Captain of our Salvation shall lead us, there is no reason to doubt but we shall come off conquerors. The aids and provisions, he has given us, are sufficient to carry us through them all, with safety and with glory.

It is then of great moment to our happiness, to consider with all seriousness and attention of mind,

I. WHAT those remedies and supports are, which the Religion of Christ holdeth forth to us; and

II. OF what singular use they may be, in our passage through this vale of misery.

THE Gospel encourageth us to expect, in this our pilgrimage through life, special dispensations of Providence, expiations of sin, assistances of God's Spirit, and a state of salvation and happiness after death.

Now

Now these are helps and comforts of such mighty virtue and efficacy, as will ever prevail over all worldly calamity. If God be thus with us, it matters not what may be against us. If we have faith and confidence in those promises of the Almighty, it will not be in the power of human ills, however grievous and manifold, to wound our spirit and destroy our peace. We shall rise triumphant over all the force of tribulation, and come out unhurt and with fresh lustre from the fiery trials of life,

I shall only consider at present, what courage and strength under tribulation, the sense of God's particular Providence and the consciousness of the pardon of sin are capable of infusing into the heart of Man,

ANXIETY and discontent are the primary and constituent parts of human misery. But the religious principles, I have
just

DISCOURSE IV. 111

just mentioned, are a fovereign preservative against them both.

WE are all indeed subject, every moment we live, to innumerable evils from every quarter. The Seasons may bring with them distempers. The common occurrences of the world may introduce mischances. Every period of life has its peculiar maladies. The tenderness of age, and the fervour of youth, and the weakness of advanced years carry with them, each their own diseases. The connexions, we have with our fellow-creatures, in the ordinary transactions of the world, may occasion crosses and adversity.

BUT then what has the true Christian to dread from this variety of misfortune, with which we are surrounded daily ; who firmly believeth, there is a good and almighty God, that presides over the Universe, and is particularly regardful of his

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obedient children? What reason can there be for any tormenting care and fearful solicitude on our part, amid the various dangers and disasters, which beset us; if we are not wanting in the discharge of our respective duties, and are duly persuaded, that there is a wise and a gracious Being, who delighteth not in the misery of his creatures, and at whose Sovereign disposal, and under whose Supreme direction are all the events of things? — Or rather what just cause will there not be, for patience, for resignation and fortitude, under all the accidents and afflictions of life, if we are well assured, that we ourselves and all our affairs are in the hands of a kind and faithful Creator, who beareth a fatherly affection towards us, and is tenderly concerned for our happiness; and has expressly promised, to make all things in the end work together for our good, if we render ourselves worthy of his protection and favour?

ARE

ARE you under misfortune and affliction? Look up to the God of mercy and faithfulness, and reflect how able and how well-disposed he is either to remove your trouble, or to support you under it. And this consideration will be to every good man abundant matter of hope and consolation. Is your life full of maladies, and your continuance in being painful and precarious? A trust and confidence in the Lord of Hosts, and in the special designations of his Providence, will furnish strength and spirits enough to carry you through these bitter sufferings with patience and resignation. Does the outrage of Men, or the fury of the Elements threaten your destruction? Your heart need not fail nor be dismayed; if you have a lively faith in the sovereignty of the Creator; if you cordially entertain this heart-easing persuasion, that the great Lord of the Universe exerciseth a dominion over all his creatures, and can stop or divert the powers

of Nature and the machinations of Men, just as he pleaseth; if you cherish a steadfast faith in the promises of God; if this conviction rests upon your mind, that he will not abandon nor leave desolate and undefended his faithful and dutiful Servants.

DOES Prosperity dwell in your house; do you inherit the good things of the land; have you plenty of those materials, that may administer to the convenience and the pleasure of life? The firm belief of an over-ruling Power, that is concerned for the security and stability of your fortunes, will yield much increase of felicity. It will season every worldly enjoyment with a more exquisite relish of delight, and will take off that satiety, and prevent that querulous search after new satisfactions, which are too apt to accompany the full possession of earthly gratifications: while it disposes a Man to consider himself as a mere dependant on the bounty

DISCOURSE IV. 115

bounty of Heaven, to reflect that his treasures are all forfeitable at pleasure, and only to be retained upon the condition of contentedness in his acquisitions, and in the not abusing them to the prejudice of himself or of others, and to the dishonour of the Donor.

WHAT a disconsolate and perplexing scene of confusion and wretchedness has the Atheist formed, in his vain imagination, for his fellow-creatures, by subjecting the world to the capricious or uncontrollable misrule either of Fortune or of Fate? What a dreary and horrid prospect is presented in his hideous scheme of things, by the exclusion of a God and a Providence? Where all things happen alike to all; and there is "one event to the righteous and to the wicked*."

ON

* Dicet aliquis, quid mihi prodest philosophia, si Fatum est? quid prodest, si Deus rector est?

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quid

ON the contrary how full of good and solid hope, that fair and ever-pleasing offspring of a busy and active mind; how replete with comfort and joyful expectation is the life of the true Believer; who is always sensible of the continual presence of the Almighty, who ever confides in the special interpositions of Heaven! *

THE

quid prodest, si Casus imperat? Nam et mutari certa non possunt, et nihil præparari potest adversus incerta; si aut consilium meum Deus occupavit, decrevitque quid facerem, aut consilio meo nil fortuna permittit. Seneca. Epist. 16.

How cold and comfortless is the observation of the Stoic hereupon! What an embarrassment does the doctrine of Fate occasion in his System!

Quicquid est ex his, Lucili, vel si omnia hæc sunt, philosophandum est: siue nos inexorabili lege Fata constringunt, siue arbiter Deus Universi cuncta disponit, siue Casus res humanas sine ordine impellit et jactat, philosophia nos tueri debet. Senec. Ibid.

* The high commendation, which Lucretius gives of his favourite Master Epicurus, is full indeed of poetry, but yet equally full of extravagance and prejudice; and altogether void of reason and sound philosophy. For what are the human fears, which that wild and romantic Theorist has subdued, except only those slavish and superstitious fears, that are utterly destructive of true religion?

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THE sense of guilt and the apprehension of punishment are the worst evils, that can befall us, on this side of the grave. This is true from unquestionable authority. We may trust his word for it; whose large
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Humana antè oculos foedè cum vita jaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
Quæ caput è cœli regionibus ostendebat
Horribili super adspectu mortalibus instans;
Primum Graïus homo mortales tollere contra
Est oculos ausus, primusque obsistere contra.

Lucret. de Rer. Nat. I.

Tu Pater et rerum Inventor: Tu patria nobis
Suppeditas præcepta, tuisque ex, Inclyte, chartis,
Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
Omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,
Aurea, perpetuâ semper dignissima vitâ.
Nam simul ac ratio tua cœpit vociferari,
Naturam rerum haud Divinâ mente coörtam,
Diffugiunt animi terrores — Ibid. III.

— Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclyte Memmi,
Qui Princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
Nunc adpellatur sapientia: quique per artem
Fluctibus è tantis vitam, tantisque tenebris,
In tam tranquillo, et tam clarâ luce locavit.

Ibid. V.

Hæc igitur qui cuncta subegerit, ex animoque
Expulerit dictis, non armis; nonne decebit
Hunc Hominem numero Divûm dignari esse.

Ibid.

experience of the world, and consummate knowledge of all the evils under the sun make his decision in the case final and unappealable. Hear then this Royal Preacher :

And yet this same Master-piece of wisdom, this same self-taught and divine Philosopher, as the Poet in a vehement fit of outrageous Zeal is pleased to call him, is treated very contemptuously by the Academic in Cicero ; as a notable and ignorant Plagiary in Physical matters, without the least erudition or any taste for literature.

Epicurus tuus — quid dicit, quod non modò philosophiâ dignum sit, sed mediocri prudentiâ ? Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 22.

Ista à vobis quasi dictata redduntur, quæ Epicurus oscitans hallucinatus est ; cùm quidè̃m gloriaretur se magistrum habuisse nullum : quod et non prædicanti tamen facilè quidè̃m crederem ; sicut mali ædificii domino glorianti se architectum non habuisse. Nihil enim floret ex Academiâ, nihil nè ex Lyceo, nihil nè è puerilibus quidè̃m disciplinis. Ibid. 26.

De cætero vellem equidem aut ipse doctrinis instructior (est enim, quod ita tibi videri necesse est, non satis politus his artibus, quas qui tenent Eruditi adpellantur) — Cic. de Fin. I. 7.

Principio, inquam, in Physicis, quibus maxime gloriatur, totus est alienus.

Ita quæ mutat, ea corrumpit : quæ sequitur, sunt tota Democriti. Ibid. 6.

Atqui si hæc Democritea non audisset, quid audierat ? Quid enim in Physicis Epicuri non ex Democrito ? Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 26.

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“The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity: but a wounded spirit who can bear?”*

This is a declaration likewise, to the truth of which every man's breast is an unexceptionable witness. There is undoubtedly in the spirit of man a certain firmness of mind and greatness of soul, not to be subdued by any bodily pain or worldly calamity. Numberless instances of this kind have appeared in the Christian World. But not a single case is to be produced, where human nature has not been totally overcome, by the anguish and agony of the mind. How many have been driven, by the intolerable smart of a wounded conscience, into the fury of madness and the rage of despair? What multitudes have not sunk under the insupportable weight of an uneasy mind, and have not been quite overwhelmed with deep melancholy and grief inconsolable? Who have not drooped and groaned under the heavy pressure of an afflicted spirit; and with what

* Prov. XVIII. 14.

diffi-

difficulty have they dragged on the burden of a life, utterly joyless and void of all comfort? And thus it must needs be in the very nature of the thing. For when the power itself, by which we are to sustain the calamities of life, is broken and shattered into pieces, the very foundation of our peace can no longer have its due support; the main pillar of our happiness must at once give way, and the whole fabric instantly tumble into ruins.

BEHOLD then the wisdom and the goodness of God, in the gracious dispensation of the Gospel. We have there full assurance of the merits and mediation of a crucified Saviour; the sacrifice of whose blood is a sufficient atonement for sin; and therefore the only proper expedient to relieve us from this most wretched state of Mortality. By this grand Charter of our holy Religion we have a special grant of the pardon and remission of sin, upon a sincere repentance for
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DISCOURSE IV. 121

past offences, and an honest and steady endeavour after obedience for the time to come.

A stedfast faith therefore in the promises of the Gospel is alone sufficient to give us a compleat victory, over the whole combined force of all our adversaries. This inward principle once firmly established will clear the breast of all anxiety, and fill the heart with comfort and joy unspeakable. It will effectually shut up all the avenues to fear and discontent, and diffuse around a general chearfulness and satisfaction. For what security and happiness can be imagined greater; and what interruption can this blisful state ever meet with; when we have good reason to conclude, that our sins are no more; that we are the favourites of Heaven; and may justly expect the continual protection and blessing of the Almighty?

WHEREFORE let us put on this holy armour of God. It will be found proof
against

against every assault in the day of trial; and will render us invulnerable by the sharpest darts of Adversity. Surely thus heavenly-clad, and thus furnished with weapons from above, we may safely defy the power of all the enemies of our peace. "Though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousand at our right hand," through the multitude and strength of worldly evils; yet we need not be dismayed. If we hold fast our faith and our integrity, we shall still find support enough from on high, to compleat our victory over them. Nay, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, let us fear no evil. The light of God's countenance will be a powerful and unerring guide to us; and those blessed comforts, which the Gospel of Christ infuseth into the heart of every true Believer, will enable us to face all dangers, and with undaunted courage to overcome all the terrors of the world.

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DISCOURSE V.
PREACHED AT
THE CHAPEL ROYAL
IN
KENSINGTON PALACE.

DISCOURSE V.

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ISAIAH XII. 2.

*Behold, God is my Salvation : I will
trust and not be afraid.*

IT is not without just cause, that Isaiah has been eminently styled the Evangelical Prophet. There are indeed various Predictions interspersed in all the writings of the Prophets, relative to the condition and circumstances of Christ and his Religion ; but there is no Prophet more full and emphatical in his descriptions of this nature, than the Prophet now before us. The text is one remarkable instance out of many, that might be selected for this
pur-

purpose. "Behold, God is my Salvation : I will trust and not be afraid."

NOTHING surely can be more truly characteristic of the genius and blessings of the Gospel : nothing can be more plainly declarative of the good Christian's support and confidence. The most solid foundation of human happiness is a lively sense of the protection and favour of the Almighty. Such a persuasion of mind will banish at once from the breast of Man all those fretting and gloomy passions, which are destructive of our peace, and at the same time infuse into the Soul great consolation and joy.

Now Reason may instruct us, that we and all our concerns are under the government and care of a powerful, a wise, and a good Being. Experience and observation may teach us, it must be the will of Providence, that we cultivate Virtue and
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Religion, in order to gain the favour of Heaven, and secure our own happiness. But what information can reason give us, that through the fear of danger or the force of temptation, we shall not deviate from our duty; and by our offences forfeit the good will and approbation of our Creator, and so endanger our own Salvation? What security can the light of Nature afford us, that we shall not by our sins incur the displeasure of God, and bring down his heavy vengeance upon us?

A satisfactory account of these matters is to be had only from the Revelation of the Gospel. The good Christian alone can justly take to himself on all occasions this never-failing and substantial consolation. "Behold, God is my Salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid".

MOST certainly if a Man has a well grounded assurance of the merciful assist-

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ance of God in the great work of his Salvation, he may with a fearless spirit of resolution encounter all the dangers and difficulties of life; he may with an undisturbed peace and serenity of mind wait patiently the issues and events of things. Let us see then,

I. WHAT good reason we have to conclude from the principles of our holy Religion, that "God is our Salvation"; and therefore,

II. WITH what safety we may boldly resolve to "trust and not be afraid".

THE assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, and the merit and mediation of the great Redeemer of Mankind make a principal part, in the promises of the Religion of Christ. This is a truth, that shines out with distinguished lustre, in every page almost of the New Testament. A Man must
read

read his Bible with a weak head or a perverted heart, who does not see this glaring truth, and is not sensible of the strong influence of it, throughout those Sacred Writings. This is such a leading principle in the Gospel-dispensation, as must meet him at every turn. Even "he may read that runneth", and yet not have this remarkable point escape his notice and observation. Nay, such is the prevailing strength and brightness of this truth, that even those, who seem to read the Scripture with no other view, than to furnish themselves with arms against it, have not been able with all their artifice, to subdue the force, or eclipse the splendour of it.

INDEED this appears so evidently to be the whole scope and design of the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and is so frequently and uniformly represented, as the main pillar of our faith in Christ, that if our confidence in the truth of

these points is without foundation, then is the preaching of the Gospel vain, and the means of Salvation there prescribed are fruitless and unavailable. If these fundamental doctrines are false or groundless, the Religion of Jesus must be untrue or unprofitable. But a Man must be far advanced in the dark, and as it should seem comfortless paths of unbelief, who can be so presumptuous, as to entertain such a thought as this, or have hardiness enough to venture upon such an assertion. But be that as it will. My business at present is not to silence the cavils, and put an end to the disputes of the unbeliever; but rather to enliven the hopes of the Christian, and to administer consolation to the Faithful.

BELIEVEST thou Christ and his Apostles? Hast thou faith in the promises of the Gospel? — Say then to thy Soul,
 “behold God is my Salvation : I will trust
 and

and not be afraid". For if Christ be indeed the Saviour of the World: if faith in his Death and Passion will in fact justify us before God: if in truth we have the influence of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten our understandings, to strengthen our wills, and to quicken our obedience; then must we need have the most firm and durable foundation for our trust and confidence, the most sovereign remedy against all the fears, and the best support under all the evils of life.

THE two grand sources of anxiety and misery are the fear of sin and the fear of death. Numerous indeed are the calamities of life, under every condition and circumstance of our Being. Troops of evil surround us on every side, and stand ready to attack us from every quarter. We have great reason therefore to be terrified with the apprehension of danger. But there is nothing so alarming and so

truly dreadful to man as sin. This is the forest evil, that can befall us in this world. It is a disease of the greatest malignancy; a malady, whose symptoms are terribly fatal. Nor are the effects of sin less shocking and pernicious. It preys upon the Spirit of a man with relentless and insatiable fury. It blasts at once all his blooming hopes of peace and comfort, and eats out like a canker-worm all the sweets of his enjoyments.

AND no wonder, that under the dominion of sin a man is full of such misgivings of heart and fearful apprehensions, as overwhelm his soul with wretchedness; when he is sensible that he stands defenceless and exposed to the just indignation of an all-powerful and all-righteous Governor; whose authority he has despised; whose blessings he has abused; and whose patience he has wearied out by his manifold transgressions.

NOR

NOR can the utmost stretch of human understanding furnish an expedient to relieve us from this distressful state. Reason will tell us indeed, that Man is frail, and God is merciful; and thus suggest matter of hope, that the tears of repentance may wash away our sins. Nature may incline us to think, that the clamours of sin will be silenced by the noise and bustle of the world; that our fears may be laid asleep by the hurry and fatigue of business; and that the soft whispers of conscience cannot be heard amid the tumultuous riots of pleasure or of glory. But alas! this comfort is as fleeting as the wind. That hope is as unstable as the sea. The least storm of adversity will ruffle the composure of our spirits, darken at once the blissful prospect, and leave the soul in a state of utter uncertainty and perplexity.

WE shall be apt to imagine, under such circumstances, that the change in our con-

dition is the effect of our wickedness, and only an anticipation of that vengeance, which we have reason to apprehend. And when once the melancholy of such thoughts invades the soul, the dubious suggestions of reason concerning the remission of our sins, and the precarious dependance upon the mercifulness of our judge, when the flagrancy of our offences calls aloud for justice, will prove an ineffectual remedy, to mitigate the pangs of nature.

HOWEVER upon the least vacancy from worldly concerns; when the violence of passion is subsiding and the impetuosity of desire growing less and less; when this fever of the soul once begins to intermit, and the mind is left coolly to animadvert upon its own situation; then will torturing reflections on our sin and our guilt instantly recur, and a painful sollicitude arise about our future welfare.

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IT is a vain attempt to quiet this disturbance within, by hoping that the imbecillity of human nature may plead in our behalf and prevail with a merciful God, to suspend or remit the sentence of condemnation. This expectation will be found to rest upon unsolid and infirm ground; this very hope to be full of nothing but doubtfulness and anxiety; when we fairly consider, what heinousness of guilt has been contracted by our manifold and notorious transgressions; what an insult must have been shewn to the justice, what indignity offered to the honour of our Creator, by such kind of offences, as were committed against the plain remonstrances and strong conviction of our own conscience, in direct opposition to the kindest indulgence and most tender care and regard of our heavenly Father, in open defiance of his awful Majesty, and in manifest contempt and despite of his tremendous threatnings. Surely we
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can never assuage the remorse and anguish of our minds, and shelter ourselves from the apprehension of impending ruin, under such weak succours of reason, such unsubstantial supports of nature, against the impulse and vehemence of so powerful a consternation, against the force and fury of such mighty terrors.

AND this trust and confidence grows still weaker, and our fears gain strength at the expectation or approach of death. The consciousness of sin makes the bitterness of death still more grievous and insupportable. Our strong attachment to the things of this world gives such an eagerness to our desire of Life, and makes Death appear so full of horror, that nature shudders at the dismal prospect. But when this dread of losing life is accompanied with excruciating reflections on our own sinful conduct, and a certain fearful looking for
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of judgement and fiery indignation, what then must needs be the extremity of our agony and despair?

THE fear of sin may be considered as a painful situation of mind, occasioned by the act of sin, or the danger of falling into transgression. These two fears are so closely connected indeed, that the one is naturally productive of the other. A Man, who dreads the consequence of his crimes, cannot but be uneasy at the apprehension of committing them.

IT were in vain to expect from the Religion of Nature any assistance, in either of these respects. We have already seen what slight comfort, and what feeble support Reason can give us, from the precarious hope of God's being propitious to us, under the guilt of our sinful provocations; and therefore in what endless doubt and perplexity it must leave us involved,

volved, in a point of the last importance to our happiness. And to flatter ourselves that we shall be able, by any natural succours of our own, to overcome the deceitfulness of sin, is still more fallacious and vain. For though the charms of virtue, when once viewed with sedateness and attention, cannot fail of exciting our admiration and our love*: though the beauty of holiness must touch the heart of Man, when once it gains a fair admittance; yet the glittering and delusive shew of sin doth so catch the eye and dazzle the sight, as to render us unapt to behold the distant light and loveliness of either. Vice by its flattering compliance with our respective humours so strikes the passions and captivates the heart, as to make us insensible of the softer impressions of goodness, and

* Formam quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem Honesti vides, quæ si oculis cerneatur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sapientiæ. Cic. de Officiis, I. 5.

to leave us without the least relish for the secret graces of piety.

Now while we are thus led away with false appearances, (and thus seduced we generally shall be, if left to ourselves) it is no marvel, we mistake the strait road to Heaven, and fall into cross paths, that point directly to Death and eternal ruin.

BUT thanks be to God! we are not left in this forlorn and hopeless condition, to grope out our way, in the midst of darkness, without the aid of any friendly guide. We have the steady and unerring light of the Gospel, to direct our feet aright, and the powerful presence of God's Spirit, to guard and conduct our steps with safety.

UNDER this heavenly influence and direction, we may boldly say with the Prophet, "I will trust and not be afraid". The
Lord

Lord is at hand. The Spirit of God will enlighten and invigorate the Soul, and wonderfully improve every faculty of the Mind. The gracious influence of the Holy Ghost will rectify our nature, will strengthen and direct the powers of the understanding, will purify and regulate the affections of the will. In short, through this blessed assistance we shall see our duty with clearness and conviction: we shall be able to pursue our duty with resolution and steadiness.

SURELY it will then be in vain for Vice to spread forth her pleasureable allurements. Wickedness will then solicit our compliance in vain. The insidious disguises of Sin will then no longer cheat us of our happiness. The veil of Iniquity will be stript off at once; and we shall instantly discover her native ugliness, and the full proportion of her odious form.

WHAT

WHAT disturbance therefore of our peace can the fear of temptation in such a case create? What interruption of our happiness can the danger of Sin then occasion?

THE Religion of the Gospel has made ample provision too against that other fear, which arises from the commission of sin. We may here have recourse with safety to the efficacious merits of a crucified Saviour. We may trust with boldness to their sovereign virtue, for the atonement of sin; provided we render those merits and this atonement applicable to ourselves, by a lively faith and an hearty repentance.

THUS likewise will Death itself be disarmed of its greatest terror: for "the sting of Death is sin." This it is, that wounds so deeply the conscience of a Man. This it is, that alarms him with so many

many frightful apprehensions, at the approach of Death. This it is, that adds so much to the natural horror of dying. But a firm belief in the intercession of Christ will at once extract this sting of Death. True faith in the Blood of Jesus will soon cure the anguish of the wound, and stop effectually the spreading venom of it.

THUS the good Christian can have no fears to struggle with at that solemn summons, but those of leaving this present transitory world, and entering upon another, that is to last for ever.

AND here again the Religion of Christ will seasonably intervene and be of singular benefit. It will enable him to detach his affections from things on earth, and to despise the fading glories of this lower world. It will replenish his soul with uncommon comfort, and give him joyful expectations beyond the grave. It will open

a fair prospect into the heavenly regions of eternal happiness, and insure him a portion among the Saints in bliss.

IF he has attended to the admonitions of the Gospel, he must be sensible, that his Creator never intended he should take up his abode here; that by the appointment of Heaven all men are once to die; and as others have undergone before him this trial of mortality, so he is bound to submit to the same fatal condition;* that this life

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* This seems to have been reputed the best argument against the fear of death by that sublime and elegant Writer, who has drawn the Epicurean Philosophy in the most beautiful and expressive colourings of Poetry.

Hoc etiam tibi Tute interdum dicere possis:
 Lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit;
 Qui melior multis, quam Tu fuit, improbe, rebus.
 Inde alii multi reges, rerumque potentes
 Occiderunt, magnis qui gentibus imperitârint.
 Ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare
 magnum
 Stravit, iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum,
 Ac pedibus falsas docuit super ire lacunas;

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Et

is only preparatory to another; and that by the pangs of death he will instantly be delivered into a regenerated state, where the calamities and the pains of life will be for ever at an end.

How can a man, full of these reflections, cast a longing eye on the vanities of the world, or be unwilling to relinquish it? How can he with reluctance quit a scene of vexation and inquietude, where he is only a poor momentary sojourner and hour-

Et contempsit aquis insultans murmura ponti,
Lumine adempto animum moribundo corpore
fudit.

Scipiades belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror
Ossa dedit terræ, proinde ac famul infimus esset.

Adde repertores doctrinarum atque leporum;
Adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus

Homerus

Sceptra potitus eâdem aliis sopitus quiete est:
Denique Democritum postquam matura vetustas
Admonuit memorem motus languescere mentis,
Sponte suâ letho caput obvius intulit. Ipse,
Ipse Epicurus obît decurso lumine vitæ,
Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
Restinxit stellas, exortus uti æthereus sol.

Lucret. de Rerum Nat. III. 1038—1057.

ly on his journey to his native country*, a land of rest and a land of happiness. Surely he can never think of entertaining a fondness for a place where he is only "as a guest, that tarrieth but a day." Surely he must rather be induced to treat it with indifference at least and disregard. But his attachments to life will not merely be dissolved, this unconcernedness and neglect for the world will be heightened even into contempt and disdain; when he recollects,

* So life and our departure out of it is represented not only in the Apostolical Epistles and the writings of the primitive Fathers, but even in the Philosophical inquiries of one of the wisest and best of the Pagans.

Si te hoc fortè delectat, posse animos, cùm è corporibus excefferint, in cælum quasi in domicilium suum pervenire. Cic. Tusc. Disp. I. 11.

Mihi quidèm naturam animi intuenti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio multoque obscurior, qualis animus in corpore sit, tanquam alienæ domi, quàm qualis, cùm exierit et in liberum cælum quasi domum suam venerit. Ibid. 12.

De vitâ ita discedo tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo: commorandi enim natura diverforium nobis, non habitandi dedit. Cic. de Senectute, 23.

that he has been farther instructed by the same oracle of God ; that his detention in this fleshly tabernacle is a sore obstruction to his happiness ; that to “ be present in the body is to be absent from the Lord ; ” that he only now sees through a glass darkly the faint resemblance of the King of Glory ; but that after he is unclothed of this corporeal vesture, he shall behold him as he is, face to face, arrayed with that splendor of Majesty, which “ eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

WHAT peace and resignation of mind, what joy of heart and complacency of soul must such considerations bring a man, at the approach of this change of our nature, when our outward form is falling into ruin and dissolution ? Especially when we call to remembrance the great Charter of our Salvation sent down immediately from the very presence of God, sealed by the blood of his own beloved Son, and con-
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signed to the sons of men by the hands of his Apostles, who died themselves in justification of its truth and authenticity. This single thought is itself sufficient to vanquish all the pain and the terror of dying. For how can we much regard the one or be greatly affected with the other, when we may have through faith in the Gospel this assurance upon our minds, that the meritoriousness of the Christian sacrifice is conveyed along with us, to cover our infirmities and justify our imperfections; that our Redeemer stands ready at the right hand of God, to plead our pardon and make intercession for us, and to pronounce that sentence of transport and endearment; "Come ye Blessed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, prepared for You from the beginning of the world."

SEE then and admire the mighty power and efficacy of our holy Religion in dispelling those mists of doubt, and those clouds

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of ignorance, which are wont to encompass this our Mortal State; and in dissipating that gloom of melancholy and perplexity, which the fear of sin and the fear of death must naturally create.

WHEREFORE let us with all thankfulness adore the majesty of God, for his unspeakable mercy, in contriving the blessed means of our Salvation.

IT was an instance of great and undeserved goodness in our Creator to call us forth into being, and to give us this Station of eminence and dignity, amongst the multitude of creatures which he has formed, and to make that ample provision for our subsistence and security, which cannot fail, but through our own default, to make our residence on earth comfortable and happy. But his good-will and loving-kindness to the sons of men is still more conspicuous, in persisting to consult our welfare, not-
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withstanding our numerous and abominable provocations. Although we have been a stiff-necked and rebellious people, always running counter to the injunctions and disobeying the commands of our Governor; although we have merited no favour at his hands, but rather indignation and fury; yet in the midst "of judgment he hath remembered mercy." He hath sent his only-begotten Son to reduce us to our duty by the fair methods of gentleness and persuasion, to re-instate us in the favour and acceptance of an offended God, and to lead us on without danger or trouble, to a land of peace and glory, world without end.

LET us therefore with hearts full of gratitude acknowledge the exceeding great love of our Redeemer, for thus empowering us through his gracious overtures in the Gospel, to live without fear, and to die full of hope and comfort.

DISCOURSE VI

HARRY THURGOOD

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

DISCOURSE VI.

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

IN THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

DISCOURSE VI

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DISCOURSE VI.

MATT. VI. 31, 32, 33.

— *Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be cloathed?*

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

NOTHING indicates more egregious inconsistency, than the belief of an over-ruling Providence, and immoderate care for the things of this life. If we have a
full

full conviction that there is a supreme Being, who interests himself in the affairs of Men, so as to make all things work together for their good who love and obey him; it is impossible but such a persuasion must have some influence over our conduct: it cannot but render us more contented and easy in our present situation, and less thoughtful and disturbed about future events. Indeed we have reason to think that the blessings of Providence are not to be expected without our own hearty concurrence; a proper use therefore of such means of subsistence, as God has put into our hands, is altogether necessary, is not to be dispensed with: yet when we have discharged with faithfulness the several duties of our respective stations, and made that needful provision, which our own sagacity may point out, and our own power enable us to make; there can then be no just cause, why we should suffer any farther care to disturb our quiet. The consciousness

ness of having done our duty will empower us to rest satisfied with our present condition; and the sense of a superiour Being, ordering all things both in Heaven and Earth for the happiness of his creatures, will dispose us with great confidence to trust to the goodness and promises of God, for the success of our honest endeavours.

ALL worldly care is by no means to be discouraged. A concern for the things of this life is one of the first principles, which both Self-love and Benevolence teaches and inculcates. It is what Reason plainly dictates, it is what Religion strongly recommends. In truth the very condition of our Being exacts it from us. Then only is this solicitude to be reprov'd, when it exceeds its due bounds. When our attachment to things on earth becomes so violent and inordinate, as to create in us a continual restlessness and anxiety of mind, it is unreasonable, it is sinful. Such a disposition

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robs life of all its comforts, and embitters and spoils all our enjoyments. Such a conduct argues a distrust of the Providence of God, and shews a disregard to all religion. Whatever the worldly-minded may pretend, his behaviour betrays in him an evil heart of unbelief. His unwearied and excessive toil in the pursuit and acquisition of temporal goods, his over-carefulness and discontent in the possession, and his indecent murmurings and utter despondency of mind under the loss of them, are plain indications that he "careth not for God, neither is God in all his thoughts." For whence can arise all this doubt and perplexity? What account is to be given of all these anxious fears and dismal apprehensions about his present or future circumstances in the World; if he knows and considers that there is a wise and a gracious God, who is the supreme governour of the Universe, and is acquainted with the necessities of all his creatures; if he heartily believes, that

that this Lord of all things hath both power sufficient to enable him, and goodness enough to incline him to provide for and protect them.

IN the dark and disconsolate state of Heathenism, where the impious doctrine of blind Chance had quite effaced the very knowledge of a Divine Providence in Some, and the absurd persuasion of a necessary and fatal series of events had rendered that knowledge unaffecting and useless to Others ; where at best the belief of a Providence did not extend itself to Human affairs; under such circumstances it is no wonder to find the Gentiles either in a state of profound quiet and indolence, or over-assiduous in providing for their present support, and over-careful and over-sollicitous about future contingencies. But That behaviour, which might appear not wrong perhaps, or even justifiable upon Pagan principles, becomes utterly un-

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accountable, absolutely inexcusable in a Christian.

WE have an assurance that is adequate to the most sanguine expectation, and will stand the most scrupulous test of the reasonable and ingenuous enquirer, that we are under the immediate care and protection of that Lord and Governour, whom unbounded goodness will incite, unerring wisdom will direct, and unlimited power will enable to assist and relieve us. This is a truth, for which we have the most unquestionable authority. It is the express declaration of God himself; "Who is not a Man, that he should lie, or the son of Man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" If therefore we acknowledge a revelation of the Divine will vouchsafed to the sons of men; if we are persuaded that this Revelation is contained in the writings of the Gospel;

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Gospel; then it must follow by unavoidable consequence, that all excessive fondness and immoderate anxiety for the things pertaining to this life, is wholly to be discouraged and repressed; or that our conduct is void of consistency and discretion: we thus renounce all dependence upon the sovereignty of the Almighty, reject the blessings, which he is graciously pleased to hold forth to us, and contradict the avowed principles of our holy religion.

SINCE then the doctrine of a Providence is confessedly of such vast importance to mankind; since the belief of it is the only sure remedy against the vain and vexatious cares of life, and the only true source of that peace, that contentment, that complacency of mind, which is the firm foundation of a lasting and substantial happiness; it will be well worth our pains and attention to consider;

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IN what manner our faith in this great article of Religion may be established and confirmed.

THE several parts of this visible world cannot more evidently shew the extreme folly and perverseness of Some men in disbelieving a God, than they do demonstrate the great weakness and extravagance of Others in denying a Providence. Indeed the belief of a God and a Providence are things that have so necessary and so intimate a connexion, that it is impossible to doubt of the truth and reality of the latter, without calling in question the existence of the former. He, who is foolish enough to think, that the world has existed from eternity without any external cause, must likewise be convinced, that no external cause is necessary to its preservation: He too, who vainly imagines, that we are beholden to Chance for the present System of things, must maintain, if he would be consistent, that the same Chance supports
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and continues it in being. But if we acknowledge a wise, a good, and a powerful Being, who made the world; we must also own, that the same wisdom, power, and goodness is employed in overlooking and taking care of it. The admirable constitution of all things visible, the contrivance, the beauty, the variety, the uniformity, which is observable throughout the known world, cannot fail of impressing upon every ingenuous mind a deep sense of the wise and beneficent Author of it: And the wonderful provision, which is every where and at all times made for the good order of the whole, and for the well being of every individual, no less evidently declare his over-ruling Providence.

LOOK up to the Firmament, and contemplate those glorious bodies, which move above us: Observe the constant and grateful change of day and night, the beautiful and regular vicissitude of the seasons: Consider

by what equable and stated laws the Sun, the Moon, and all the Host of heaven, the Air, the Earth, the Waters are governed; what a profusion of blessings by these means are conveyed to all things living: Survey if possible that infinite diversity of Creatures, and that invariable distinction of species, which occur in every part of the Animal and the Vegetable world: and yet see the marvellous care, which is bestowed for the present support of every individual, even the most minute and contemptible, as well as for its future subsistence: These things, impartially viewed and seriously laid to heart, prove beyond all reasonable contradiction, that as there is a God, who by his power created the Heavens and the Earth, and made all things what they are; so that he still continues to uphold them by his Providence.

ALL created Beings, from their very nature and the circumstances of their state, continually depend upon the will and the
power

power of their Creator. If his influence is once withdrawn, they must sink that moment into their original nothing. The several powers of Nature are nothing else, but the various effects of the Divine energy, exerted in diverse manners and under different regulations. That wonderful œconomy, in which Animal and Vegetative life wholly consists, is no otherwise to be kept up than by certain established laws, to which this part of the System is constantly made subject. But these laws themselves derive their whole efficacy and due execution from the agency alone of Providence. That grand principle whatever it is, which runs through the whole compass of the visible world, and by which all things are actuated and subsist; by which the heavenly motions are directed and preserved; by which the Air, we breathe, the Earth we live upon, and the Waters that encompass it, are knit and held together, cannot be maintained in its full vigour, but by the

immediate hand of God. Nor is this true only of that Force, which is inherent in the bulk of matter, which pervades the larger masses of it, and gives them such a marvellous tendency to each other, so various, and yet so regular at differences of distance : It is true also of those other two Forces, which encompass the minute and component particles of matter, upon which the constitution and form of corporeal beings seem altogether to depend, and which are found in fact to have so great a share in many wonderful operations of Nature. It is now beyond dispute, that these general properties of Body, which contribute so largely to the order and preservation of the visible System, are quite immechanical. They are therefore an argument from experience and observation of the continual and immediate agency of that over-ruling Power, "which hath stretched forth the Heavens and laid the foundations of the Earth." The activity and motion of the
Bodily

Bodily part of man, a substance quite inert and incapable of changing its state, is not a plainer demonstration of the existence and particular influence of our Spiritual part, than these un-essential principles of the material world, so wisely super-induced, are an evident proof of the special presence and dominion of God throughout all his visible works. * If therefore that Almighty

* That the divine Omnipresence is agreeable to our natural conceptions of God, appears evident from the general opinion that prevailed amongst the wisest of the Ancient Philosophers, the Pythagoreans and the Stoics, concerning the soul of the world. For though this notion was adopted afterwards by the Atheistic tribe and degenerated into mere Naturalism; yet originally it was understood in a sober sense and implied, that God pervaded and actuated the Universe, as the human soul informs the body of man. This is what Sextus Empiricus affirms of Pythagoras expressly :

Εν γὰρ ὑπάρχειν πνεῦμα τὸ διὰ παντὸς κόσμῳ διήκον, ψυχῆς τρόπον. — Adv. Physic. I. §. 127.

Clemens Alexandrinus asserts the same thing of the Stoics. Οὐδὲ μὲν τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς παρελεύσομαι, διὰ πάσης ὕλης τὸ Θεῖον διήκειν λέγουσας — Προλεπ. v.

And to this the definition, which Zeno gives of God, plainly accords : Πνεῦμα διήκον δι' ἅλα τῷ κόσμῳ. Diog. Laert. in vit.

mighty Being, who presides over and informs the Universe, by whom the various springs and movements of the whole and of every single part are regulated; if this Being was once to withhold his power and remit his care and government, there must instantly follow an universal wreck of Na-

Hence these descriptions in Aratus, Virgil, and Lucan,

— Μεσαὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαί
 Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί· μεσὴ δὲ Θάλασσα
 Καὶ λιμένες· Πάντῃ δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα Πάντες.
 Arati Phænom. I.

— Deum namque ire per omnes
 Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.
 Virg. Georg. IV. v. 220.

— Cœlum ac terras, camposque liquentes
 Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque astra
 Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
 Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.
 Æneid. VI. v. 724.

Estnè Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
 Et cœlum? —

Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.
 Lucan. Pharf. IX. v. 577.

And hence that sublime representation of the Godhead in our English Poet; a noble and beautiful improvement on the Ancients, and that from Christian principles. Pope's Essay on Man Epist. I. v. 266 — 280,

ture:

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ture : all would be confusion and ruin : every thing must immediately cease to be. So true are those declarations of the Apostle; "By Him all things were created, that are in Heaven and that are in Earth; and by Him all things consist. For in Him alone they live, move, and have their being."

THE providential care of God is no less conspicuous in the Moral, than it is in the Natural world. He has set up his Vicegerent in every Man's breast, for his guidance and information. We feel a power within, that not only checks and controuls us in a vicious course, and fills us with inward remorse and sorrow; that not only commends and encourages us for our virtuous behaviour, and gives us a proportionable share of joy and satisfaction; but also infuses into our hearts the awful sense of a superior Being, who inspects our conduct and is privy to our very thoughts and resolutions. And the force of this principle
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prevails in a greater, or less degree over all Mankind; the most puissant Monarch is no less sensible of these emotions in the breast, than the meanest of his subjects; and this too, even though their behaviour is known to themselves alone; though their actions were done with the greatest secrecy, just as much as if they had been produced upon an open theatre, and exposed to the view of all the world. Now this power of conscience, whether it is implanted in our natures, interwoven with our very frame and constitution, or whether it is the effect of reason and education; either way it appears to be a plain intimation from the Deity himself, who has formed our souls susceptible of such impressions, that he concerns himself with human affairs, regards the manner of our lives, and observes the good or evil tendency of our actions,

THE force of this reasoning receives an additional strength from the consideration
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of those means, by which the sollicitations of Vice are guarded against and discouraged; by which the interests of Virtue are promoted and secured. Nature has given us a Law, directing to what is good, and prohibiting that which is evil. And by this Law the great lines of duty are so fairly drawn and so strongly impressed on the mind of man, as not to escape the notice, nor to surpass the comprehension of any Rational creature. Piety, Justice, and Sobriety are the obvious suggestions of the Human breast. And there is in them a certain natural aptitude to gain our approbation, and to excite our esteem. But then the unbridled force of passion is wont to attack us with so much impetuosity and fury, as to bear down the barrier of reason, and to hurry us on beyond the plain bounds of duty. Conscience is therefore placed as a guard to stop us in our career, and by gentle whispers and silent remonstrances to prevent

prevent the transgressions of those limits, which Nature and Reason have assigned for our conduct. This faithful and ever watchful Monitor is perpetually labouring to divert us from what is wrong and perilous, by the sharp rebukes of pain and sorrow; and strives with equal assiduity to lead us on to our true and essential interest, by the encouragement and recommendation of joy and complacency of soul. A notable instance surely of the continual care and constant concern of our Maker for our well-being! But lest this internal sanction, thus powerfully joined to the Moral Law should not produce its due effect; lest this inward bulwark of Virtue should not be so fortified, as to become proof against the violence of lawless and reprobate nature, its strength is outwardly corroborated, by the addition of extraneous force. Where conscience is found too weak and apt to give way, under the vehement onsets of inordinate appetites, there the prospect of worldly
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infelicity commonly comes in as a seasonable auxiliary, and frequently restrains the exorbitancy of our passions.

THE wise and kind Author of Nature has so contrived matters, in the ordinary course and constitution of things, that a man cannot be Vicious but he must be Miserable in some degree or other. Nor has he left Virtue, in the general order of Nature, unaccompanied with happiness, and unrewarded with some sort of worldly blessing. The steady Adherents to Moral Duty, who persevere with resolution and constancy, in keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and Man, are rarely disappointed of the good things of this life. They are seldom frustrated in their designs, or defeated in their undertakings. Most things concur towards their success in the world, and the furtherance of their felicity. The Pious and the Good are sure to favour them with their friendship, and
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to lend them their assistance. Even the Wicked and the Prophane are not disposed to attempt aught to their prejudice or harm. Thus securing the good will of their fellow-creatures they are at once relieved from much vexation and mischief, and meet with little or no obstructions to their earthly enjoyments. The same righteous methods, by which their worldly concerns are crowned with prosperity, do also for the most part ascertain the stability of their fortunes, and insure a perpetuity of happiness.

Now as there is some native and striking charm in Virtue and Religion, that by a secret kind of fascination constrains every dispassionate beholder, even the Dissolute and the Prophane, to approve and admire it; so there are some common principles both in the nature of Man, and the constitution of External Objects, that he is conversant about in this world; by the
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operation and influence of which it usually comes to pass, that a virtuous and religious conduct is productive of happiness and perfective of our natures; and the contrary behaviour becomes introductive of misery and subversive of our being. I need not enumerate particulars. I may safely appeal to the experience of mankind for the general truth of this assertion, that an assiduous performance of Moral Duty is sure to have in the train of its attendants, healthfulness of body and durableness of life, tranquillity of mind and joyfulness of heart: whereas ruin of fortune and a diseased habit of body, vexation of spirit and an untimely discontinuance in this earthly abode are the undivided companions of the Libertine and the Profligate.

WHAT then is all this but a wise establishment and gracious provision for the security and recommendation of universal righteousness, for the discouragement and

prevention of every sort of iniquity? There is an internal sanction annexed to the Law of Nature from the secret force of conscience; and this authority of it is guarded and strengthened by an external constitution in the Moral World. They both conspire, at once to direct and regulate Human conduct, and to declare and support a Divine government.

THE same principles of Nature and the same care and inspection of Heaven is manifested, in the preservation of Communities as well as in the fortunes of Individuals. The ruin or prosperity of Nations appears evidently to be proportioned to their respective Moral demerits or Moral deservings. This the experience of every Age abundantly testifies. And this notification of an over-ruling Power in civil societies is confirmed beyond all reasonable dispute by the marvellous revolutions, that are oftentimes brought about in the several
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kingdoms of men, and that by such means and instruments, as are utterly inadequate to the accomplishment of those important events, and altogether inexplicable from the mere power and capacity of man. It is not necessary to descend to particular proofs. The history of our own Country, and that of every other State in the habitable world are full of well-known instances to this purpose.

THUS much Reason alone undoubtedly is able to discover: thus far we go upon sure and uncontroverted grounds in our enquiries into God's care and government of the World. But the great question in agitation between the Theist and the Christian is this; Whether God has settled and adjusted things in such a manner, as to leave the visible System to the agency and direction of general laws, originally impressed; and to suffer all Events to be brought about by the working of natural

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and secondary causes; or Whether he has reserved to himself a power of providing for particular emergencies, by a particular influence?

THUS much surely is indisputable. God may so over-rule and temper the powers of nature, as to suit its operations to the several circumstances of mankind. He may secretly and by ways unknown to us dispose those various events of things, which being unforeseen, unexpected, or undesign'd by us we are apt to call chance or accident; so as to make them answer the particular ends of his Providence. He may in such a manner affect the hearts of men upon special occasions, as shall not destroy their natural liberty, and yet make them instruments in carrying on his great designs.

BUT all this is, I think, much more than barely possible. The foregoing considerations give it an air of great probability.
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And reason enables us, to go still farther, as it appears to me, in our important researches into the ways of Providence.

THE power and dominion of the Almighty must reach to every part of the Universe; nor can the presence of the Omnipotent be excluded from any created existences. In fact we find, his laws and constitutions do take place throughout the whole extent of creation; and the efficiency of these very laws and constitutions depends not all, either upon the will and capacity of man, or upon the spontaneity and power of Animate, or upon the essence and properties of Inanimate Nature. Why then should we make a difficulty in believing, that the immediate agency and particular interpositions of the all-righteous Governor of the world should be more confined, and under greater limitations than the power and the presence of the all-bounteous Author of it; especially where the im-

portance and exigency of the case demands special superintendence and direction?

WANT of belief in this respect seems not so much to arise from any inability of reason or weakness of evidence; as from some certain pre-possessions of the mind. A pre-conceived notion, that such a care and influence of Providence cannot consist with the general laws of Nature, and a previous apprehension, that it is incompatible with the Majesty of God, impede the understanding, obstruct the attention, and prevent a fair and candid scrutiny.

Now both these appear to be plain misconceptions of the nature and operations of God. For consider how far human art is capable of adjusting the powers of Nature and the wills and affections of Men, so as to make them subservient to its purposes; not indeed by changing the established course of things or by affecting hu-
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man liberty, but by a skilful application of them both. By which means many effects have been and continually are produced, which unguided nature would never of itself have brought about.

WHAT reason then can there be for not thinking, that the same things may be effected in a much higher degree, and after a much more extraordinary manner by that first and supreme Cause, who “hath created and ordered all things that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, and by whom they all consist”?

“How can these things be”? is a method of evasion, as unfair and unphilosophical, as it is arrogant and presumptuous. It argues an incapableness of rational opposition; and yet an aversion to the ingenuous acknowledgment of conviction. It is a bold obtrusion upon the prerogative of Heaven; it is assuming a pride of under-

standing the inscrutable manner of the secret workings of God, which even the most contemptible object in Nature, that falls under the cognizance of our senses might, one should imagine, sufficiently humble. Our knowledge extends only to the existences of things and their apparent properties. The cause of their being is utterly beyond the human comprehension, and the manner of their acting for the most part hidden and unperceivable.

NOR can it surely be a diminution of the dignity of God, to interpose his providential management, as may best correspond to the end of his government; that his goodness should direct and regulate, whatever his wisdom and power have contrived and formed: unless it can be thought that immense care and vast multiplicity of concern will be an interruption to the happiness, and a burden and perplexity to the intelligence of the Almighty. A notion
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utterly destructive of the all-sufficiency of God, and terminating only in the exploded error and gross impiety of Epicurus.

THE train of reasoning, here pursued, must have the greater solidity and forcibleness with the true Believer, as it is conformable to the declarations of God himself, on the dominion and extent of his Providence.

No man, that reads the Bible, and believeth it to be the word of God, can doubt either that God at first created the Universe, or that he still preserves and governs it, not only by those general laws, which he has fixed in the ordinary course of nature; but also by a particular and immediate influence and direction. The whole history of the Jews is nothing else but one continued scene of the various interpositions of the Deity and of the particular dispensations of his Providence to that Nation.

And the Scriptures of the old and new Testament have taught us to believe that the same God, who concerned himself in so extraordinary a manner for his peculiar people, extends his fatherly care to all his creatures; that no part of Nature is so far emancipated from his power, as not to be made continually subservient to his will; that every individual of the whole Human species is under his immediate care and protection. What else can be the meaning of those express declarations which we meet with in every page almost of those writings? He is there represented as a "being, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works." He is said to "feed the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes in the sea, and whatever else there is, which liveth upon the face of the whole earth." He is set forth as "ruling in Heaven and in Earth; as doing in them both whatsoever he pleaseth; as balancing the clouds, and sending the rain; as making
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the winds and the sea to obey him." The most inconsiderable events, such as the falling of a sparrow to the ground, are said to be matter of his notice and observation; and the most minute thing not to escape his knowledge; "even the sands of the sea, and the hairs of our head are all numbered by him." It is declared that in a more especial manner he "beholdeth the sons of men, and spieth out all their ways; that he maketh the righteous to prosper, and suffereth not the wicked to go away unpunished; that the hearts of all men are in his hands, and that he boweth and turneth them, as it seemeth him good." These expressions and many more to the same effect, which frequently occur in Scripture, are no otherwise to be understood, can have no other purport or signification, than that God directeth all the powers of Nature, disposeth all the Events of things, and ruleth in the hearts of all Men, so as to make them best serve the important purposes of

a particular Providence. And this truth is confirmed to us beyond all possibility of doubt by the promises and threatenings, by the precepts and exhortations of the Gospel. We have there the "promise of the life, which now is, as well as of that which is to come, if we walk in the ways of Godliness:" We are encouraged to expect the blessings of God upon all our endeavours, to be secure from harm in our persons and successful in our fortunes, "if we be followers of that which is good:" We are told not to hope for the enjoyments of life, "not to think of seeing good days, unless we do good, and refrain from evil; for the eyes of the Lord are against them that work wickedness:" We are commanded "in every thing by prayer and supplication to let our requests be known unto God;" and at the same time excited to it with this assurance, that the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:" We are exhorted to be careful for
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nothing, but to cast all our care upon God; for he careth for us, and will make all things work together for good to them, that diligently seek him."

BUT the words of the Text, which I have read to you, may serve to establish this point instead of any other argument. We are commanded by Christ himself and that in as express a manner, as words can do it, not to be over-anxious and careful about the things of this life; but to do our duty and to mind the business of our respective stations; and then to leave the issues and events of things to God himself, who engages to give us all things that shall be needful or convenient for us.

Now these promises and threatenings can serve no purpose, if God does not interpose in human affairs, but leaves the disposal of things to general laws. Without a particular Providence these precepts and

exhortations must appear superfluous and vain.

THIS account of the divine Providence, which the Scripture hath given us, contains a doctrine that no less tends to the glory of God, than it is full of comfort to Man. There is as much justness as there is piety, in that observation of the devout Psalmist; "the Heavens declare the glory of God; the Earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Certainly nothing less than infinite Wisdom could contrive such a wonderful System of creatures; nothing less than unlimited Power could bring them forth into being; nothing less than unbounded Goodness could provide so amply for their happiness. But to suppose that this same Being, who made the world, is able to look through the whole compass of Nature; that he is present to every part of it; that he not only observes every thing, which passeth therein, but directs the vari-

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ous movements of this grand machine by his own immediate power; so as to promote the good order of the whole Universe and the happiness of all his creatures in it; to suppose this of God, is to entertain the most magnificent, and at the same time the most amiable notion of him. And to set him forth to us in the manner, which the Scriptures have done, as endued with such a nature, as exercising such a providence, is to shew him in fact to be the most perfect and the most glorious of Beings.

THE Epicurean scheme of things not only exhibits to us a most unlovely picture of the Deity; but also opens a most gloomy and comfortless scene of the World; where God is placed in a state of the most profound indolence, absolutely unconcerned at whatever passes throughout the whole extent of the Universe; where chance and accident bear an uncontrollable sway. Nor are things in a better but rather worse situation

tion upon the Stoical Hypothesis ; since it is more desiræable to live under the chance of altering a wretched condition, than to have it irreversibly fixed by an absolute and inexorable Fate. But upon the Christian plan we have the comfortable assurance of being in the hands of a good and faithful Creator ; one, who hath an affectionate and fatherly concern for us, and hath promised to make us happy, if we shew ourselves deserving of his favour.

WITH this joyous expectation every good man may rest contented and easy in his condition, whatever it be ; having a well grounded confidence, that if his circumstances are prosperous, they will be secured to him by the providence of God ; that if he is in a state of adversity, the same gracious providence will either remove his troubles or support him under them. However casual and irregular the events of things may appear ; however the violence of the
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Elements or the fury of Men may threaten our destruction; amidst all the uncertainties, the casualties, and the vexations of life, yet still we may be certain, that there is a God above, who knoweth and directeth all things; in whose goodness therefore and promises lie our security and our happiness.

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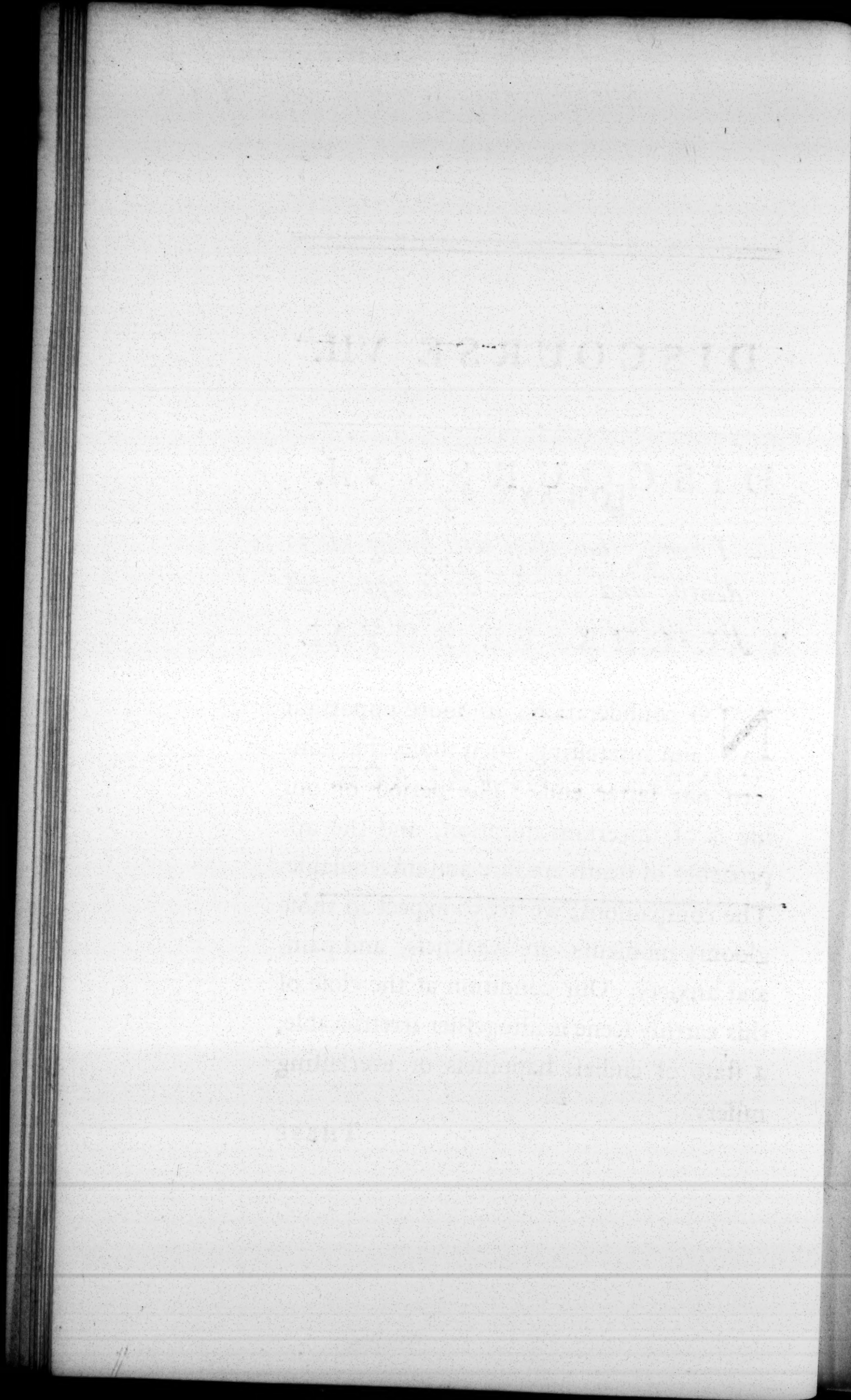
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DISCOURSE VII.

PREACHED AT
THE CHAPEL ROYAL
IN
KENSINGTON PALACE.



DISCOURSE VII.

JOB XXX. 23.

— *I know, that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*

NO considerations are more important and interesting, than those, that concern our latter end. The period of our life is of uncertain duration, and the approaches of death are sure and unavoidable. The companions, we are to expect in those gloomy moments, are weakness, and pain, and anxiety. Our condition at the close of this earthly scene is altogether irretrievable, a state of endless happiness or everlasting misery.

THESE are things of the greatest moment and concernment to us all. They contain a large fund either of comfort or of torment, according as they have been carefully attended to, or presumptuously neglected, in the conduct of our lives.

THAT such reflections therefore may tend to the edification of the Hearer; the only purport and merit of this part of our Ministry; and that they may have their due influence upon us, towards the improvement of our lives; the only good effect, that can justify the labour of the Preacher;

I. I shall endeavour to shew the truth and propriety of them;

II. AND then point out the great use and benefit, which we ought to make of them, would we be wise unto salvation, through the whole of our conduct; as long as we
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have any part to act, upon this great Theatre of the World.

EXPERIENCE, our best and most faithful guide in matters of this sort, bears undoubted testimony, how precarious is the issue of human life; how much our continuance in being is out of our own power; how little our stay here is to be depended upon. Various are the maladies, to which we are daily subject, and manifold the casualties, that are always apt to befall us. Some are the offspring of the infirmities of Nature. Others are the effect of ignorance or neglect; but most of them have their rise from our own presumption and misconduct. The seeds of destruction are sown at our very birth; and they soon take root and spread themselves over our whole frame: they are growing nearer and nearer to maturity through every stage of life, and are perpetually weakening and undermining all the springs of it, till they

put a period to our being. The stroke of death is indeed sometimes earlier and sometimes of later date, but never deferred to any great distance of time; yet wherever it does fall, the effect is fatal and inevitable. This earthly fabric at once gives way; and we instantly tumble into ruins.

GRADUAL oftentimes are the decays of life, and the advances of our destroying enemy slow and unperceivable; but we scarcely ever fail to be harassed beforehand, by those direful messengers and instruments of death, torture of body and agony of soul. Sickness and debility generally make way for a long train of miserable attendants, that usher in with awful solemnity this great King of terrors. At that important crisis the finishing hand is put to this state of probation. Then will our accounts be at once closed, and so they must remain to the general judgment, without the least power of change on our part. By
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them therefore alone is our eternal doom to be determined: by them alone shall we be consigned over, either to the favour or displeasure of the Almighty, and that too, tremendous thought! for ever and ever.

THESE are things to be learnt from the soft whispers of our own breasts: these are lessons, which our own reason teaches us aloud: these are those weighty matters, which are warranted by the unquestionable testimony of our own experience.

BUT we have a yet surer method of information, even the lively oracles of that God, whose word cannot be falsified, and whose promises will most assuredly be made good.

THE life of man is represented in Scripture as a dream that vanisheth, a cloud that soon passeth away, a vapour that is dissipated at once, and seen no more: such

plain similitudes, as denote it to be of a very fleeting nature and uncertain continuance. Our abode upon earth is there said to be "as a shadow, that fleeth and never remaineth in one stay." Man we are told, is like unto vanity; "his days are as grass, and as the flower of the field: for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof knoweth it no more." Take therefore the advice of the Royal Preacher; "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest;"* for, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. Hear what a venerable Apostle, one of those authorized messengers of heaven, has declared; "it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this, the judgment;† when the Lord the righteous judge shall render to every man, according to his deeds:" Attend to what the

* Eccles. IX. 10. XI. 3. † Heb. IX. 27.

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Saviour of mankind has himself published to the world, concerning the event of human life; Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Now these things were written for the admonition of us all. We are too apt to subdue the suggestions of conscience, to stifle all insinuations from within, that direct to our spiritual welfare, by our vehement and inordinate attachment to the things of this life. We are very prone either so to distract ourselves with the cares, or entangle ourselves with the interests, or immerse ourselves in the pleasures of the world; as to be generally regardless of the calls of duty, and the concerns of

* John V. 28, 29.

religion. We seldom mind, what experience telleth us of the shortness and the uncertainty of life; or pay any attention to what reason says of the durableness of that unchangeable state, that is immediately to ensue. Though we have daily before our eyes perpetual remembrancers of our own mortality, and we cannot but know, that this is the only time, we are to have, for the proof of our innocence, and for the trial of our virtue; yet such objects and such considerations most frequently pass by us unregarded; or if they do at first make some impression upon our minds; this impression is so faint and transient, that it soon vanisheth away, or is at once set aside by every the least trifle or vanity of life.

OUR gracious God therefore, out of his abundant kindness and mercy to us, has vouchsafed to instruct us by his Scriptures, what is the main business he expects at our hands; and to urge us to the speedy dispatch

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patch of it by the rewards of his promises, or by the terrors of his threatnings.

To induce us therefore to a compliance with the gracious intentions of our God; I shall point out, of what singular use and benefit considerations on our latter end and the circumstances of it may be to us in the course of our lives, if they are attended to, with that seriousness and earnestness of heart, which they justly deserve.

FREQUENT and serious meditations on death will dispose us to live in a constant expectation of it. The strange conduct of great part of mankind in this respect is just matter of concern to the tender feelings of humanity. They are as heedless and unmindful of this important affair, as if they were no ways interested in the event of it. In all other cases of worldly moment they never fail to keep the main point steadily in view, and to shew the utmost

most sollicitude about the issue of it. The avaricious and wordly minded never lose sight one moment of the object of their wishes, fordid as it is. The ambitious are ever assiduously intent on the glittering phantom of glory, however vain and insignificant. The voluptuous are no less anxious and importunate in quest of pleasure and sensual gratifications, though so utterly beneath the dignity, and so much debasing the nature of man. The approach of death is that point alone of all others most disregarded; though of all others it is that point, which is of the last consequence and of the highest consideration.

AND no wonder, that men are thus wildly seduced through every period of life, insecure of their being, and yet insensible of their danger; so long as they give themselves no leisure to reflect, that they are daily travelling towards the chambers of death, and that the more unexpected the period

riod of this our journey is, the more unwelcome it needs must prove. Whereas if due attention is paid to the uncertainty of life, and the perpetual advances of death upon us were made matter of serious meditation, and became the frequent employment of our thoughts, this must incline us to live always in expectation of that, which we know not how soon may arrive: The great benefit of which will be, that we shall never suffer ourselves to be unprepared for so fatal an event; nor leave a concern of such mighty importance unprovided for.

A due preparation and proper provision will extract at once the sting of death, mitigate the pain of dying, and vanquish all the terrors of it. Great part of the despondency and anguish of mind, which men are apt to feel at the approach of death, arises from a recollection of their past carelessness and unconcernedness about it. They begin then to think, that they have been
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trifling away their time all along, in pursuit of vanities, and wearying themselves with incessant toil after such kind of things, as cannot profit them. They perceive the delusive charms of wealth, of pleasure, and of glory are all vanished and gone. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life begin then to please no more. They find their attachments to the things of this life quite dissolved and at an end; and at a time when all outward comforts fail, they are sensible of no manner of support from within. Nothing occurs to their thoughts, but severe and excruciating reflections on their past folly and miscarriages; which must create the sorest and most oppressive of all human ills, such bitter pangs of self-condemnation and remorse, as are sufficient to overwhelm the sinking soul with wretchedness. And what will be no slender addition to their misery, a certain misgiving and fearfulness of heart, and an horrible dread

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takes possession of their minds, at the consciousness of dying in an unprepared state, and so exposing themselves to they know not what loss and hazard, which nothing they have done or can now do will ever compensate or retrieve.

BUT the prepared persons, at their departure out of life, have none of these alarming fears, none of this grievous disquiet to encounter. This world has always been considered by Them as a passage to the chambers of the grave, and death as their sure guide and conductor thither; and being thus familiarized to their thoughts it puts on a less dreadful appearance; and the sense of being in a condition not unfit to die, and the approbation of their own conduct thereupon, cannot fail to administer such fresh strength and consolation, as will enable them to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, without horror or dejection of Spirit.

A happiness how truly desirable! A situation most earnestly to be wished, at this severe trial of our nature!

WHAT methods then will be most available to this purpose, must be a consideration well worthy our most fixed attention, and most serious regard.

THE remembrance of a well-spent life is the only effectual remedy against the fears and the pain of death. But a life cannot be well spent, except in the paths of virtue and religion. Where these unerring guides conduct our designs, and favour our pursuits, there and there only we live to any good purpose; there we maintain the dignity of our nature; there we answer the end of our being.

MOST certainly we were not made merely for the indulgence of our carnal appetites, to eat and to drink, and to take our
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fill of sensual delights. These brutal pleasures put us on a level only with the Beasts, that perish. Doubtless we were framed for more excellent enjoyments, for the contemplation of God, for the knowledge of the wonderful works of his Providence and Grace, for promoting the happiness of our fellow-creatures, and for securing the salvation of our own immortal souls. These are the true and great concerns of such reasonable creatures, as we are. These are the spiritual employments for which alone we were sent into this lower world. And all this is only to be effected, by a virtuous and religious conduct.

A life of piety and holiness is the most illustrious instance, we can give, of our studious concern for the advancement of God's glory. It is the best preservative of the happiness of others, and the most efficacious means we can use, for the attainment of our own. For it shews in the most

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exemplary manner the superiour excellence and dignity of our nature. It manifests in the noblest way the power, the wisdom, the goodness, and the majesty of Heaven. It establishes most firmly peace on earth and good-will amongst men; and it places us more immediately under the protection and the favour of the Almighty.

Now these considerations will furnish us with such a perpetual spring of pure consolation, as cannot fail to minister strength and spirits enough, to bear us up under every calamitous and trying circumstance of life. This ground of hope and rejoicing will be so far from deserting us on the bed of sickness, or at the hour of death, as all earthly comforts are sure to do, when we want them most, that it will then collect new force and unwonted vigour. For consider; what can more powerfully support and refresh us in our dying moments, than this self-complacency of soul, that we have
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endeavoured all our life long, “to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God”; that we have gone through our appointed task cheerfully and faithfully; that we have nothing to dread from the displeasure of our Master, nothing to expect but the reward of our honest labours, in that state, which we are just entering upon, where all our fears and labours shall cease; where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; but one continued scene of everlasting peace and joy, one uninterrupted course of happiness eternal

THE COURSE VIII

THE HART ROYAL

ALINGTON PLACE

DISCOURSE VIII.

PREACHED AT

THE CHAPEL ROYAL

IN

KENSINGTON PALACE.

DISCOUNT

DISCOURSE VIII.

ROM. VIII. 28.

— *We know that all things work together for good to them, that love God.*

IT is a singular instance of the gracious dispensations of Providence, that our Duty and our Interest are so closely connected together. The great Governour of the World does not exact an unwilling submission, with the severity of an imperious Master ; but solicits a cheerful obedience, with the tenderness and concern of an indulgent Father. Not content with exerting his own right of Sovereignty, he is

ever careful to manifest to us the great reasonableness of what he requireth at our hands. He does not think it sufficient to satisfy our judgment concerning the right, which he hath to our obedience, without convincing our reason of the expediency of our duty, and recommending the importance of it to our choice and esteem. He hath laid indeed his commands upon us, and hath enforced his authority with the weightiest sanctions; but yet his laws are tempered and our obedience is sweetened with every ingredient of mercy and kindness. He hath roused our fear; but he hath excited our love.

IN truth the love of God is bound upon us by all the most sacred ties of Duty, which Nature or Reason can suggest. Whatever is amiable or excellent in itself; whatever is beneficial or valuable to us, appears with distinguished lustre in the nature and proceedings of the Almighty.

IF

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IF goodness and wisdom, if righteousness and mercy have any power over the wills and understandings of men; if the experience of present blessings, or the remembrance of past enjoyments, or the hopes of future happiness can work on our reason or our affections; then certainly we have abundant cause to love the Lord our God.

CONSIDER the Creation of the world or the Redemption of Man, and observe what great and wonderful things the Lord our God hath done for us. See what a magnificence of design is shewn in all the works of Nature! what a justness and beauty is displayed in the execution! what a profusion of blessings is experienced, in the result and consequence!

REFLECT on the riches of God's goodness, in the redemption of the World. What marvellous condescension to the inferior-

firmities of Man! what tender compassion of their misery! what amazing sollicitude for their happiness!

WHEN we behold the several parts of this visible System, and regard the end of the Creation, we cannot fail of having our minds impressed with admiration, with reverence, with esteem. But when we contemplate the Christian dispensation, and the means of salvation therein prescribed, our hearts must need glow and be expanded, with the most exalted sentiments of gratitude and love.

“AND what doth the Lord thy God require of thee for all these benefits, which he hath done unto thee, but to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind.” Our love of God ought to be as great in its sincerity, as comprehensive in its extent: it ought to be accompanied with

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as much earnestness and zeal, as with steadiness and perseverance. It must be fervent and unfeigned: it must be entire and universal: it must be constant, and it must be cheerful.

THE true love of God doth not consist in the extatic violence of affection; but in a moral and rational conduct. It is not the effect of nature and passion only, but of reason also. It is warm indeed and lively; but it is discreet and sober: vigorous and operative, but sedate and void of ostentation. It breaks not out in the wild sallies of an heated imagination, but issues forth in serious and rational strains of unaffected piety. It bursts not forth in the mad starts and extravagant rant of the Enthusiast; nor dies away in the lukewarmness and languor of the mere Religionist; but being equally removed from both extremes, it burns serene and steady, and yet with a glow and energy in the hearts of the Faithful.

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THE love of God, thus characterized and circumstanced, will be of great efficacy and extent in the conduct of life, and of the last importance to our happiness. When this principle is once firmly rooted in the breast of man and sprung up to maturity, it cannot fail to shed forth in great abundance the sweet fruits of a religious and virtuous obedience. Where the true love of God prevails, it becometh a sovereign preservative against sin, and the most powerful incentive to all goodness. In vain will Vice, by open assault or secret artifice, assail that man, whose heart is fixed, believing in the Lord.

WE are apt, it is natural for us to imitate those, whose excellence and worth have rendered them the deserved objects of our approbation and esteem. We cannot but be studious to recommend ourselves to their favour and acceptance, who have justly established themselves a place in our affections

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fections. What will it then avail, that pride and ambition, fraud and rapine, extortion and cruelty lay before us the profits and the glories of this world, when we are assured, that the God, whom we adore, "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" We shall despise and hate every thing, how advantageous and honourable soever it may appear, in the estimate of Man, when we are convinced, that it must be odious and detestable in the judgment of God.

AND under the influence of this persuasion, we shall ever be disposed, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. What effect can the charms and blandishments of pleasure have upon us, with which lust and intemperance, deceit and guile, prophaneness and immorality may flatter our fancies, when we know such things are an abomination in the sight of that God, whom we love and serve?

NOR

NOR is the love of God more the bane and destruction of wickedness, than it is fruitful of piety and virtue. Love is a strong and active principle, that never fails to urge us on to an intercourse and familiarity with its favourite object. What fervency then of devotion, in our addresses to God, must the love of him not inspire? What an earnestness and vehemence of desire must it not create, to keep up the holy communication, by frequent access to him, in prayer and thanksgiving?

Now a faith and confidence in God, thus rooted and grounded in love, will furnish the breast with every principle of goodness, of which the mind of man is susceptible. It will instil into him benevolence of heart and simplicity of manners, innocence of soul and integrity of life. In short, it will make "us holy even as he is holy, in all manner of conversation." For how can we avoid cherishing every good thought,

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thought, and striving after every good word and work, when we are satisfied, that the eyes of the Lord, whose favour we covet above all things, are “only over the righteous, and his ears only open to their prayers?” How can we be willing to preserve a correspondence with God, in acts of piety, when we are sensible that our hearts are not right with him; but must feel many misgivings of conscience, for failure in point of obedience?

AND if, through the weakness and frailty of Nature, and the prevalence and strength of Temptations, we are at any time inclined to deviate from our duty; we have just reason to expect some extraordinary supplies and support, from the Spirit of God, if we sincerely love him; whose holy influence and suggestions will infuse into our souls every grace and every virtue, and lead us on imperceptibly to all goodness.

BUT

BUT lest these considerations should not have moment enough to incline us to our duty; the Lord of life has thrown into the scale an additional weight, that still more nearly concerns us. He hath made our interest our duty. "We know, says the Apostle, that all things work together for good to them, that love God."

IT is a mighty encouragement and recommendation of the love of God, that it not only proves our bounden duty, but also is in fact our reasonable service. We are undoubtedly under great obligations to love the Lord our God, from a knowledge of his glorious perfections, and from the sense of those manifold favours, which he has bestowed, in the creation of the world and redemption of mankind. But we have still farther inducements to the practice of this duty, from considerations of the expediency and usefulness of it. The various and interesting motives to this divine love,
which

which Nature may suggest, are strengthened and enlivened by Experience, warranted and confirmed by Revelation.

REASON may instruct us, that we are here absolute dependants upon Providence; and hold every thing, we possess, merely at the will and pleasure of Heaven. Our life with all its blessings is at the sovereign disposal of the Almighty. It is then most assuredly of infinite concernment, to secure the good-will and approbation of that Being, from whom must be derived all our happiness. Nothing undoubtedly can be more efficacious in this respect, than an unfeigned love of him, manifested by an hearty sense and thankful acknowledgment of his benefits.

HE, who takes care to be the friend of God, has just reason to expect, that God will be his friend. Now one essential part of true friendship is a similitude of man-

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ners, arising from a warmth and constancy of affection. If we sincerely endeavour therefore after a likeness with God, in a religious and virtuous conduct; and pay a due regard to his authority and laws, out of a principle of love; this filial confidence and reverential awe must render him regardful of us, in all his dispensations; and induce him to shew us marks of his favour and goodness.

THE truth of this reasoning is supported by fact and experience. Who ever hardened himself against God, and prospered? Consult the publick Annals of Nations; examine the private lives of Individuals; and it will be generally found, that unhappiness has attended the Ungodly. Their peace hath oftentimes been destroyed; and their designs have been blasted and ruined, by some strange and unexpected vengeance, or by some secret and unaccountable calamity.

HEAVEN

HEAVEN never fails to pour out the bitter cup of its fury on that Man, who "careth not for God; neither is God in all his thoughts". Mark the Libertine, and behold the Scoffer; for the end of that man is misery. What discomposure of spirits, what dissatisfaction of mind, and misgivings of heart, do the Impious and Prophane at certain times experience, during their sinful conduct? They are frequently alarmed with frightful and torturing apprehensions, as Belshazzar was, amid their scenes of riot and voluptuousness. And these apprehensions are continually gaining ground, through the gradual decline of life, and are commonly seen at last to overwhelm the soul with wretchedness.

SEE now the blessedness of the contrary Character. What sweet complacency and serene joy possesses that breast, where the graces of Piety constantly reside? Devotion spreads over the mind such a fervour of

spirit, and infuses into the soul such a glow of heart, as is apt to create an inward delight beyond expression. Piety naturally inspires confidence and precludes anxiety: The former keeps off fear; the latter prevents a great degree of wretchedness.

WHAT disturbance then can that man meet with, or rather what delight and satisfaction of mind does he not experience, who boldly trusts in the Lord, in full assurance of his favour and protection; who looks up to Heaven in every step of his conduct, with cheerfulness and gratitude, having a well-grounded and joyous expectation of the blessings of Providence; and with meek resignation and untroubled spirit, patiently awaits the various events of things?

THIS holy confidence is increased, and these pious hopes are enlivened and confirmed by the authority of God himself.

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The Scriptures inform us, that godliness is great gain, being intitled to extraordinary privileges by promise, both in the life that now is and in that which is to come; but that perdition awaiteth the ungodly. For "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness". We are there told, that "no good thing will the Lord withhold from those that lead a godly life; that he forsaketh them not, nor will leave them desolate; but they are preserved for ever; and there shall be given unto them their hearts desire. For the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them, to bless them and to deliver them, in the needful time of trouble". Indeed the Moral part of the sacred Writings abounds every where with precepts and exhortations and promises of this sort; and these declarations are exemplified by a variety of instances, in the Historical.

LET this expectancy then stir us up with all diligence to furnish our breasts with the love of God. Let this persuasion animate us to serve our Maker with constancy, with sincerity, and with fervency. The former principle cannot fail of being established in our hearts, by a frequent and due consideration of the works of his hands and the ways of his Providence. To the latter conduct we shall be forcibly led, by a consciousness, that it is the only sure method of deriving the blessings of Heaven upon us, and rendering our honest endeavours efficacious and successful.

THE transcendant excellence of the Divine nature, when once it becomes the object of our thoughtful contemplation, cannot but affect our hearts and challenge our regard. Who can meditate upon a Being, all-perfect and all-sufficient, without much admiration and awe? Who can help being
struck

struck with wonder and reverence, when he seriously reflects on that God, who is "about his bed, and about his path, and spieth out all his ways"; before whose continual presence even the dispositions and intentions of his mind can find no place of concealment? Who must not be filled with silent adoration at the thoughts of that supreme Governour, whose dominion knows no boundary; and yet is exercised according to the exactest rules of universal and ever-lasting righteousness? But when we consider this Lord of immense Sovereignty and of unerring Rectitude, as concerned for our welfare and studious of our happiness; when we behold, that he has in fact provided for our subsistence with all that profusion of liberality, which the wants or the cravings of our Nature can require; when we observe, that he has guarded the abundance of our possessions and secured the permanence of our enjoyments with all the caution and tenderness of a Father, what

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transports of love must needs seize our breasts, at such endearing tokens of goodness and beneficence?

BUT our love of God must burn with redoubled vehemence, our affection towards the great Governour of the world must be exalted to the highest pitch of gratitude and joy, if there is any goodness of heart, any sensibility of nature resident within us; when we receive this farther information of the gracious intentions and exceeding great loving-kindness of our Creator and Redeemer; namely, that a Ransom is laid down for that forfeiture of happiness, which our iniquities had incurred; that an expiation therefore will be accepted of our past offences; that a claim to imputed righteousness for our not unfinning obedience will be asserted at the tribunal of our Judge; and a title irreversible determined in our favour to an inheritance in that kingdom of blessedness,

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prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

Now if these fair and honest motives of an ingenuous breast should make no impression, in exciting our love towards God; yet joined to considerations of our interest and our safety they must surely prevail and become effectual. We have an assurance from the lively oracles of God, that all the benevolent methods, that have been prosecuted either for our preservation and comfort in this terrestrial abode, or for our salvation and happiness in the celestial regions, are only conditional: they merely depend upon our shewing ourselves sensible of these divine favours, by acts of love and of obedience. However had the Scriptures, which indeed are full and decisive in this matter, been altogether silent; yet our own conscience might give us the same kind of intelligence.

No

No reasonable and considerate man can have presumption to imagine, that fortune will be made favourable to his wishes, and success be directed to crown his labours, while he lives at variance with his Creator and Governour; while he continues unregardful of the bountifulness of the most indulgent Father, and entertains no cordial affection for the friendship and favour of that most righteous Lord, who is the fountain of happiness and the sovereign disposer of every good thing. Such disingenuous behaviour on our part, such ungenerous return for the multitude of mercies, we have experienced at his hands, can be supposed to have no other intendment, at least can fairly bear no other interpretation, than a contemptuous slight and shameful indignity to the best of benefactors; a disposition of heart deservedly reputed of the worst malignity; a conduct of life justly deemed full of baseness and all iniquity. Now whether this most
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unworthy and infamous treatment of our Maker and Preserver is a likely measure for the obtaining Divine blessings, or not rather a certain method to raise the indignation of the most merciful of Beings, and procure the repentment of the Almighty, I may leave to the equitable judgment and decision of the unprejudiced mind.

ONLY let this useful admonition attend us, in all our deliberations; the noblest object of rational contemplation is the will of our Maker and the works of his Providence; the most momentous concern, and the most important occupation of human life is the attainment of that knowledge, and the perseverance in that practice, which may best recommend us to the approbation and favour of the Almighty.

THE more we discern of the power and the wisdom and the goodness of God, the
stronger

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stronger inducements shall we have to love and adore him. The more earnestly we cherish this affection of mind and this disposition of soul, the fuller assurance we must have of happiness in this present life, under the favour and protection of Heaven, and the firmer hopes of eternal blessedness, in the world which is to come.

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DISCOURSE VII.

DISCOURSE IX.

PREACHED AT
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
IN THE
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

DISCOURSE IX.

MATT. IX. 2.

— *Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

AMONG the manifold ills of human life, no one is more afflicting in its nature, more durable in its impressions, more extensive in its influence, than the sense of guilt and the dread of punishment. Every man's breast is furnished with such a faithful monitor and incorrupt judge, as suffers not his conduct to pass unobserved, and fails not to censure and reprove what is done amiss. And from the power of this governing principle neither the high condition of the Rich and Great, nor the ob-

obscure circumstances of the Mean and Indigent can plead exemption. Every condition of life from the Palace to the Cottage is subject to it. The untutored minds of the Barbarous nations of the world are no less sensible of the power of conscience, than the improved understandings of the more Civilized and Learned. Those, who have lived under the melancholy gloom of Paganism, have these inward feelings not less than Those, who have enjoyed the broad and comfortable light of the Gospel.

THE remorse and ill-bodings of an evil conscience seize the heart of man with a rigour and obstinacy not to be mollified; and penetrate so deep, as never to be extirpated. This torment and restlessness of mind is perpetually mixing itself with all our concerns, with every employment and amusement of our lives. Neither the ardent pursuit of glory in the Ambitious, nor the multiplicity of distracting cares in the

Worldly

Worldly-minded, nor the mirth and riotous living of the Voluptuous, can so far subdue these mighty impressions from within, as to leave the soul in a state of ease and tranquillity. In vain do men endeavour by any human artifice to obtain peace, so long as the consciousness of their crimes remains. We have as it were a tribunal erected within ourselves, where judgment being once passed, a man's own torturing thoughts, like so many officious servants of justice, will be ever-assiduous in executing the sentence of condemnation. And the agonizing pain of self-conviction, like the tremendous signal upon the wall, or the startling summons to the rich fool in the Gospel, will destroy the satisfaction of the choicest blessings of life. Under these afflictive circumstances the deepest penetration and the most consummate knowledge, or the firmest resolution and stoutest magnanimity will be little available to our comfort. The more intrepid

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and heroic of mortals sink under the pressure of this grievous burden, as well as the more timid and effeminate. However averse we may be with the conceited Stoic to acknowledge pains of body to be an evil;* however able we may be to endure it: yet a wounded spirit will at once convince a man, that the sense of guilt is a real calamity. The sublime Roman Satyrist, who

* The conduct of Posidonius before the renowned Roman is a flagrant instance of affectation and hypocrisy. His own feelings betrayed, what his vain-glory laboured to dissemble.

— Id dicam quod solebat narrare Pompeius, se, cum Rhodum venisset decedens ex Syriâ, audire voluisse Posidonium; sed cum audisset eum graviter esse ægrum, quod vehementer ejus artus laborarent; voluisse tamen nobilissimum philosophum visere, quem cum vidisset et salutavisset honorificisque verbis prosecutus esset, molestèque se dixisset ferre, quod eum non posset audire: at ille, Tu verò, inquit, potes; nec committam, ut dolor corporis efficiat, ut frustra tantus vir ad me venerit. Itaque narrabat eum graviter et copiosè de hoc ipso, nihil esse bonum nisi quod esset honestum, cubantem disputasse: cumque quasi faces ei doloris admoventur; sæpè dixisse, Nihil agis, Dolor: quamvis sis molestus, nunquam te esse confitebor malum. Cic. Tusc. Disp. II. 24.

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seems to have well studied the inward workings of human nature, and scourges his countrymen with an honest indignation and just severity for the flagitiousness of their lives, advises his friend not to think of avenging the villany of the person, who had injured him ; but to leave him to himself, and to the torturing lashes of his own mind, Conscience like an incensed Fury being perpetually at hand, to fill his soul with horror and anguish beyond all sufferance.* And the Scriptures have confirmed the opinion of this intelligent and virtuous Heathen, by representing under the most

* — Cur tamen hos Tu
Evassisse putes ; quos diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verbere cædit
Occultum quatiente Animo Tortore flagellum.
Juv. Sat. XIII. v. 192.

To the same effect is that observation of Lucretius ;
Sed metus in vitâ pœnarum pro malefactis
Est insignibus insignis, scelerisque luela
Carcer, et horribilis de saxo jactus deorsum,
Verbera, Carnifices, Robur, Pix, Lamina, Tædæ:
Quæ tamen et si absint ; at Mens sibi conscia facti
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos torretque flagellis.
De Rer. Nat. III. 1027—1032.

lively and affecting images, the extreme misery of the Wicked, from the painful apprehensions of their own guilty breasts.

THAT the mind of man, in this imperfect state of our nature, should be free from the sense of guilt, is a thing not to be expected. Such is our situation in this world; so seducing and delusive is the appearance of Vice; so great is the imbecillity of human reason; so many and prevailing are the frailties of human nature, that we cannot but say with the Apostle, "In many things we offend All, and fall short of our duty." The best performances of the most upright among men have so notable imperfections; and their failings are so frequent and various, as render them incapable of an unfinning obedience. The information, which the Scriptures have given us in this matter, seems not to be an undue exaggeration. Reason and experience may teach us the same thing." Who can say, I have
made

made my heart clean? I am pure from sin? There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not”.

THESE then being the circumstances of mankind, it behoveth us to consider with all seriousness and attention of mind,

By what methods our sins against heaven may be forgiven; in what manner the anger of an offended God may be appeased.

IT is in vain to please ourselves with the fond expectation of ungodly and foolish men, by asking, “How doth God know? is there knowledge in the most high”? or to flatter ourselves with the vain hopes of impunity, by thinking, that surely a merciful God will not be so rigorous with his frail creatures, as to punish them for their transgressions, “will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss”. The vehement

and pathetic expostulations of the wise and good Psalmist with these sort of men has sufficiently exposed their ignorance and mistake in one respect : “He, that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He, that formed the eye, shall he not see”? * And the other part of their error is as clearly refuted by the open confession of a Patriarch, “shall not the judge of all the earth do right”? † and by the express declaration of a Prophet, “that God is of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity.” ‡ The Roman orator, that great Oracle of human reason, may inform us, that “there is an eternal and immutable Law, which calls us to duty by commanding, and deters us from sin by forbidding; which comprehends all nations at all times under one common master and governour of all, God; who is the inventor, the propounder, the enactor of this law; and whosoever obeys it not, must first renounce himself, throw off the nature of man, and

* Psalm XC. 9. † Gen. XVIII. 25. ‡ Habak. I. 13.

subject himself perpetually to the fear of punishment".*

BUT however men may disregard the speculative reasonings of a Philosopher; however they may not attend to the more explicit admonitions of God's word: yet still they find an Instructor lodged in their own breasts, the force of whose counsel and reproof they are not able to elude. The awakening calls of this Guide of human life will oftentimes excite the attention of

* A description well deserving the encomium, which Lactantius has passed upon it.

If we may judge according to the Adage, *ex pede Herculem*, and from the fragments, that remain, form an opinion of that treatise de Republicâ, composed by so consummate a master of Reason and Policy, it is no wonder we hear of complaints in the learned world, for the loss of so valuable a part of literature.

Suscipienda igitur Dei lex est, quæ nos ad hoc iter dirigat, illa sancta, illa cœlestis, quam Marcus Tullius in libro de Repub. tertio penè divinâ voce depinxit — Quis Sacramentum Dei sciens tam significanter enarrare legem Dei possit, quàm illam homo longè à veritatis notitiâ remotus expressit?

Lact. Div. Inst. VI. 8.

the most stupid and thoughtless. Wicked men are naturally apt to grow uneasy in their present way of life, and begin at length to dread the consequences of their actions; and though they do not heartily believe a future state of retribution; yet they become miserably apprehensive, lest perhaps there should be one.

As this therefore is the state of human nature; let us next consider;

I. WHAT expedients Reason may suggest towards the alleviating this natural anxiety of mind:

II. WHAT remedy Revelation does prescribe for the cure of it.

THERE is not less justness and truth in the general purport and meaning of that observation of the prophet Eli, than there was propriety in the particular application
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of it to the case of his own sons: "If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, Who shall intreat for him"?* The utmost that the light of Nature has been able to discover, concerning the expiation of guilt, the satisfying of the divine justice, and the reconciling the offended majesty of Heaven to sinful man, has been to rest the whole cause upon the meritorious nature of Repentance and Sacrifice. The Heathen seems to have reposed all his hope and confidence in the Latter method of reconciliation; and the Former is the sole refuge and consolation of Modern Infidelity.

THERE might be substantial reasons for the institution and continuance of Sacrifice in the Patriarchal and Mosaic religions. The men, who lived under those Dispensations, might have just grounds for ascribing

* 1 Sam. II. 25.

an extraordinary degree of efficacy to such modes of worship. But what dependance could the Gentile have upon the propitiatory nature of their sacrifices? What connexion was there to be found between the blood of a Brute Animal and the expiation of Human guilt? What peculiar relation was there subsisting, between the Person, who sacrificed, and the devoted Victim, that the one might be reasonably substituted in the place of the other? How could it be supposed that the great Lord of heaven and earth should take delight in the blood of bulls, and of goats, or in the fat of fed beasts? or that there should be so much virtue in the destroying the life of an innocent beast, as to reconcile an offended God to the vicious person, who offered it.

IF the pure dictates of reason alone had been attended to, the sacrificing innocent creatures for the sake of the guilty, unless they voluntarily devoted themselves to that purpose,

purpose, must have appeared to be rather wrong in it self, and injurious to the honour of the Almighty, than a likely means of appeasing his resentment and regaining his favour. That therefore These Men, who were in all other cases guided by reason only, should in this particular instance renounce all their avowed principles, and so far contradict the suggestions of nature, as to persist in their extravagant notions concerning the intrinsic value and meritoriousness of sacrifice, is to be rationally accounted for no otherwise, than from the force and influence of Tradition. And the exact conformity between the Pagan nations and those of the Jewish People, concerning the nature and virtue of bloody sacrifices, and the proper manner of performing them, evidently shews, whence this Tradition was originally derived. It was plainly nothing else but a special appointment of God himself, first delivered to the Patriarchs, and afterwards handed down
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from age to age, through the several nations and periods of the world.

BUT of how little avail these sacrifices were in themselves, towards the removal of guilt, may be learnt from the prophets of God. Those uncommonly dignified and highly commissioned personages have declared, what indeed reason itself clearly suggests, that there was nothing in the mere shedding the blood of Beasts, which could atone for the transgressions of the Person, who shed it, and recommend him to the favour of the Almighty. These institutions had respect to an higher and more important appointment of Providence, from which alone they derived all their merit and efficacy.

NEITHER is there more virtue and meritoriousness in that other expedient of reason, which is so much magnified by the modern Unbeliever, I mean, Repentance.

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The Scriptures indeed have made repentance an indispensable condition of pardon. And it must be owned, the state and disposition of a penitent mind is in itself adapted to excite mercy, and to render a man in some degree capable of forgiveness. It shews a just sense of the dignity of the person offended, a true notion of the heinousness of the crime committed, a proper consciousness and conviction of the duty and necessity of future obedience. But how Repentance alone should be able to wipe off the stains and pollutions of guilt; how This should compensate for past offences, and should reinstate a man in that same degree of favour and acceptance, which had been forfeited by his transgressions, is not easy to comprehend.

MERE sorrow for what is past, however great and unfeigned, which is one of the constituent parts of true repentance, is no sufficient reparation of the injuries done to

God

God or Man, by an open violation of their laws. The majesty of the Legislator, and the honour of his laws give justice a kind of claim upon the Offender, and this claim is not to be satisfied without the infliction of condign punishment. The conduct of the civil Magistrate in similar circumstances is a proper illustration of this matter. Upon any notorious breach of social duty, the Sword of the civil power is unsheathed and held in readiness to execute vengeance. And no present remorse of conscience, no bitterness of sorrow in the Malefactor is thought a proper atonement for the iniquity of his past behaviour, or a sufficient cause to stay the hand of Justice. This proceeding is found to be the only security of human laws and human government. And the same kind of procedure appears to be a necessary vindication and support of the divine Legislature; civil justice being only one branch of that great stream of natural justice, by which the Divine government is
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sustained, and the order and well-being of the Universe is preserved.

NOR does the other essential part of true Repentance, a firm resolution of amendment for the future, carry with it any circumstances of a more prevailing and efficacious nature, towards the blotting out of man's transgressions. The relation, which the Creature bears to his Creator, exacts from the hands of Man an universal obedience to the laws of God. Obedience then for the future is as much a duty incumbent upon us, as obedience in times past; and of consequence, the intention and promise of obedience in the former case cannot have so much merit, as to make amends for the want of it in the latter; unless it can be thought, that the performance of duty in one instance is sufficient to answer for the violation, or neglect of it in another; than which nothing can be imagined more contrary to our distinct ideas of Duty and Justice.

tice. The making a resolution of amendment for the future is nothing else, but determining to pay a due obedience to the laws of God, for the time to come. And surely the resolving to do, what was a man's indispensable duty, previous to any such resolution, is a circumstance of no real worth, nor can acquire any just title to the approbation and favour of God.

THE design of punishment is not merely the amendment of the Party offending, or an example of terrour to Others: some regard ought to be paid, a great regard is always paid to the authority of the Laws and the Enactor of them. Now every breach of duty is a direct insult upon the majesty of Heaven. It implies disrespectful notions of the person of God, and a downright contempt of the Divine government. The behaviour therefore of sinful man does a real injury to the honour of the Deity, which his inflexible justice is bound to vindicate.

DISCOURSE IX. 255

dicare. This is that guilt, which the mind contracts by every wilful deviation from the paths of virtue, and becomes itself a proper object of Divine vengeance. What then will a resolution of amendment for the future avail in this case? Can it repair the injured honour of the most High? Can it make satisfaction to his offended Majesty? Can it remove that guilt, which is the inseparable attendant on lost innocence?

THERE is plainly no assurance of pardon to the sinner from any thing, which reason is able to suggest. Hope indeed he may; but his very hopes are built upon no reasonable foundation. His only resort must be to that inexhaustible fund, the mercy of God. But we should do well to consider, that there is a perfect harmony and consistency between all the attributes of the Divine nature. There can be no room for mercy, where justice calls for vengeance.

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And

And the offences of man against his God are of such a nature, as make the interposition of Divine justice necessary, to vindicate his honour and his laws. Nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation can await the sinners of men; unless some method be discovered, by which an adequate satisfaction may be made, for the atrociousness of their crimes.

HERE then appears the great expediency of Revelation to supply the defects of natural light. What had been hidden for ages, and lay involved in impenetrable darkness; what was in vain to be sought for in the acuteest speculations of the most consummate Philosopher; what even exceeds our largest and most sanguine hopes; That, the great storehouse of all saving knowledge, the Scriptures, have exposed to the view, and laid open to the apprehension of all mankind. "Christ our passover is sacrific-
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ed for us",* by whom we obtain the remission of our sins. "All we like sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all".†

THE presumptuous spirit of the Unbeliever may lead him to treat This, as the delusion only of a weak and enthusiastic brain : and the prophane Scoffer may be disposed to speak of it with contempt and derision. But upon a serious and impartial scrutiny, These will be found to be the "words of truth and soberness. For say I these things as a man? or say not the Scriptures the same things also"? We read in those lively oracles of God, that mankind have received a peculiar virtue and benefit from the death and passion of Jesus Christ. He is there represented as the Saviour of the world, by laying down his life for the sons

* 1 Cor. V. 7.

† Isaiah LIII. 6.

of men, by delivering himself up as an oblation for us, and by shedding his blood for the remission of our sins. He is said to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities, to bear our sins by the sacrifice of himself, to purify our natures by his own blood; and to cleanse us from all sin and wickedness. He is moreover exhibited to us under the character of a Redeemer, one who has given his life a ransom for us, to release us from the bondage of sin; to purchase our pardon; to procure our peace and reconciliation with God; and to place us in a state of favour and acceptance with him. These and a variety of other expressions of a similar nature so frequently occur in every part of the Sacred Writings; and the design of Christ's coming into the world is set forth throughout the Scriptures in so full, so plain, and so uniform a manner, that great unfairness must be used to pervert the sense of passages, so numerous, and clear, and consistent

sistent: no small study and labour is requisite to mis-interpret their native and obvious meaning.*

THUS much at least is evident, that the force of these expressions is such, as all the art and sophistry of Socinianism is not able to evade, but by ridiculous cavilling and unwarrantable explications of them, widely differing from their genuine sense, from their distinct and proper acceptation.†

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* A great Genius amongst the Moderns, whose works discover indefatigable labour and a deep fund of erudition, has shewn this at large to the satisfaction, it should seem, of every impartial and candid man. He appears indeed to have quite exhausted the subject, and to have given a solid and final decision to the Controversy.

Grotij Defensio Fidei Christianæ de Satisfactione Christi adversus Faustum Socinum.

† The interpretation, which Socinus and his Fellow-labourers have given of the words λύτρον and ἀντίλυτρον in the new Testament, is one instance out of many, that might be selected from their writings, wherein the contentious spirit of the Po-

WHATEVER difficulties therefore some subtle wits and speculative men may raise about the nature of vicarious punishment: however little disposed the Infidel and the Socinian

Ionian Brethren and their egregious perversion of Scripture-language eminently appear.

Saint Paul has averred; Εἰς γὰρ Θεὸς, εἰς καὶ μεσίτης Θεὸς καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς· ὁ δὲς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων.— 1 Tim. II. 6.

And the same thing, according to Saint Matthew, is expressly declared by Christ himself, that he came δῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῆς λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. Math. XX. 28.

Now these dextrous Controversialists maintain with a self-sufficiency and obstinacy, un-open to conviction, and in bold defiance of all authority both Sacred and Prophane, that no real ransom is here signified, no vicarious satisfaction is to be understood; that this only is meant by these expressions, that we are no otherwise redeemed by the passion of Christ, than as his doctrine and example may be a means of procuring us a bare deliverance from sin and death, by inciting and encouraging our own virtuous endeavours. Whereas λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν and ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, is according to Hesychius, τίμημα ἀντίδοτον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν or πάντων, a price laid down as a Substitution for another. This acceptance of the word τίμημα is authorized by the Septuagint in that passage of Leviticus: εἰὰν δὲ μὴ λυτρῶσαι, πραθήσεται κατὰ τὸ τίμημα αὐτῆς. And this too is conformable to that assertion of Saint Peter,

Socinian may be to admit a true propitiation, a proper redemption in the death and sacrifice of Christ; let Us learn not to be wise above that, which is written: let Us, who enjoy such

Peter, ὅτι ἔφθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ ἐλυτρώθητε — ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμὺν ἀμώμῃ καὶ ἀσπίλῃ Χριστῷ.

A Modern Writer, well versed in the language of Antiquity, has collected a variety of instances to this effect. Chapman's Eusebius. Vol. II. 291.

Hesychius in another place puts the words ἀντίλυτρον· ἀντίψυχον· as synonymous: περίφημα, says he, ἀντίλυτρον· ἀντίψυχον. Now that wonderful Adept in Literature, Salmasius, has given this interpretation of the word ἀντίψυχον; Qui pro alio devovebantur, et alieni fati vicarii sua sponte mortem obibant, Græcis ἀντίψυχοι dicti, quod animam pro animâ redderent, which he confirms by a passage in the Alcestes of Euripides. And that incomparable Scholar and Divine, Bishop Pearson, in his Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, P. II. 15. has shewed this to be true beyond all dispute.

When therefore it is affirmed of Christ by Saint Paul, that he was the person ὁ θεὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, it is the same thing, as if he had said, according to that much famed Lexicographer, ὁ θεὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίψυχον πάντων; and so indeed the beloved Disciple of Christ has expressed it, ὁ θεὸς τὴν σάρκα αὐτῆ ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ κόσμου.

This case amongst several others, that are producible from the works of the Polonian Brethren, gives reason to suspect, that they persisted in their

such happy opportunities of better information in this Enlightened Age, and in this great and glorious Land of Liberty, not join the Unlearned and the Unstable in wresting the Scriptures unto our own destruction: but rather, as it becometh wise and serious men, let us diligently consider with ourselves, what good reason every true Christian has, to apply to himself the comfortable advice, which was given to the man sick of the palsy; "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

opinion of this matter, notwithstanding the many learned and strong remonstrances to the contrary, rather with design to shew their art and acuteness at Disputation, and their skill in composition, than out of any real consciousness of the goodness of their cause.

And to do them justice it must be acknowledged, that they have availed themselves of those particulars to considerable advantage. *Biblioth. Fratrum Polonorum. Disputatio De Unigeniti Filij Dei existentia inter Erasmum Joannis et Faustum Socinum.*

Socini Disputatio De Jesu Christi Filij Dei naturâ sive essentiâ, necnon de peccatorum per ipsum expiatione.

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DISCOURSE IX. 263

CERTAINLY nothing can administer to us greater matter of real consolation and more substantial joy, than to reflect, that notwithstanding our manifold provocations, the anger of the Almighty is still averted from us; and our past iniquities do not preclude us from a state of grace and salvation.

WRETCHED would be the condition of man, if unfinning obedience was required at his hands, and no atonement or satisfaction made for those offences, into which the infirmities of human nature may betray him. He must perpetually live under the tormenting fears of some immediate Divine vengeance, or the no less miserable expectation of a future judgment. The sense of his own guilt and the apprehension of the just displeasure of an offended God must cast a melancholy gloom over every scene of life, and destroy all the peace and comfort of it. For who is there of so obdu-
rate

rate and unfeeling a nature, as to be able to bear without some horror these or such like considerations, which will frequently obtrude themselves upon our serious and retired thoughts; that our life with all its blessings are wholly at the disposal of the great Governour of the Universe; that we have forfeited the favour of that gracious Being by various transgressions of his laws, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to the dreadful effects of deserved indignation; that we are liable, every moment we live, to be summoned before that Judge, at whose righteous tribunal we stand accountable for our conduct; where we have no merits of our own to plead in our behalf, no hopes of a Mediator to make intercession for us?

IT is no wonder indeed, that the civilized Pagans of the Ancient world kept their minds free from the impression of these painful reflections. The Vulgar were able to quiet their conscience, through an erroneous

neous opinion of the sufficiency of their expiatory sacrifices; and the wiser part supported themselves against the fears of dissolution, by the force of this fallacious principle, that death is either a total extinction of being, or an immediate translation into a state of happiness. *

BUT

* What dependance the Wise and Learned among the Pagans had upon their sacrifices for the remission of sin, I know not; but they seem to have had no apprehension of any real sufferings in any future period of existence beyond the grave, if Cicero and Socrates may be permitted to speak for the rest in this particular.

Quæ est igitur ejus oratio, qua facit eum Plato usum apud Judices, jam morte multatum? Magna me, inquit, spes tenet, Judices, bene mihi evenire, quod mittar ad mortem. Necessè est enim sit alterum de duobus; ut aut sensus omnino omnes mors auferat, aut ut in alium quendam locum ex his locis morte migretur. Quamobrem, si sensus exstinguitur, morsque ei somno similis est, qui nonnunquam etiam sine visis somniorum placatissimam quietem adfert, Dî boni! quid lucri est emori? — Sin vera sunt, quæ dicuntur, migrationem esse mortem in eas oras, quas, qui è vitâ excefferunt, incolunt; id multo jam beatius est. Cic. Tusc. Disp. I. 41.

— Si supremus ille dies non extinctionem sed commutationem adfert loci; quid optabilius? Sin

BUT the modern Infidel has not even these vain hopes for his trust. His sole confidence is in the mercy of God, and the efficacy of his own repentance. But how unsafe these hopes are; how little ground there is for such confidence, while the guilt of a man's sins is unremoved, while the justice of God yet remains unsatisfied, has been abundantly shewn.

IT is the Christian alone, who has the sure and joyful prospect of an happy immortality. Our title to salvation does not

autem perimit ac delet omnino; quid melius, quam in mediis vitæ laboribus obdormiscere, et ita conniventem somno consopiri sempiterno? — Ibid. 49.

Nos verò si quid tale acciderit, ut à Deo denunciatum videatur ut exeamus è vitâ, læti et agentes gratias pareamus, ut aut in æternam et planè in nostram domum remigremus, aut omni sensu molestiâque careamus. Ibid.

O miserum senem! qui mortem contemnendam esse in tam longâ ætate non viderit; quæ aut planè negligenda est, si omnino exstinguit animum; aut etiam optanda, si aliquò eum deducit, ubi sit futurus æternus. Atqui tertium certè nihil inveniri potest. Cic. de Senectute §. 19.

depend

depend upon the precarious tenure of our own imperfect performances. We are not left to bear the heavy load of our own iniquities, destitute of all aid and recommendation, and exposed to the vengeance of an incensed and yet unappeased God, to enjoy the fatal consequences of unexpiated guilt. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation of our sins."* The merits and intercession of a crucified Saviour have repaired the breaches of our corrupted nature, filled up the deficiencies of man's obedience, turned away the wrath of our God from us, and given us a just claim to an inheritance among the Saints.

BUT it is to be carefully remembered, that the application of these merits and of this intercession to ourselves is not unconditional. An hearty concurrence of our own honest endeavours, in the ways of

* 1 John II. 1, 2.

Godliness and virtue, is necessary to give us a share in the Gospel-covenant. If we conscientiously discharge the several duties of our respective stations in that sphere of action, which Providence has assigned us; if we have a lively faith in the promises of God; if we look back with an unfeigned sorrow upon our past offences; if we strive with an unwearied sedulity to reform our lives for the time to come, by "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God;*" Then and Then only shall we have a well-grounded hope in Christ our Redeemer, and a good assurance of the favour and protection of the Almighty in this present life: Then may we rest satisfied with a full expectation of an eternal state of happiness in the world, which is to come.

* Micah VI. 8.

DISCOURSE X.

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

IN THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

MAY 29. 1762.

DISCOURSE X.

EXODUS XIV. 13.

—For ye have stood still, and see the
armies of the Lord.

NEVER was hope and consolation so
richly mingled and so seasonably
afforded, as at the time, when the
sign was made, and this encouragement
was given, by the great leader of the Jews
his people. The circumstances of the
trials at that juncture were indeed very
calamitous. They were surrounded with
difficulties in all appearance utterly un-
surmountable. They were pelted with
hardships beyond all human suffering.
They were exposed to dangers the most
deadly.

DISCOURSE X.

EXODUS XIV. 13.

— *Fear ye not: stand still, and see the
salvation of the Lord.*

NEVER was hope and consolation so much wanted and so seasonably administered, as at the time, when this declaration was made, and this encouragement was given, by the great Leader of the Jewish people. The circumstances of the Israelites at that juncture were indeed very calamitous. They were surrounded with difficulties, in all appearance utterly unsurmountable. They were pressed with hardships, beyond all human sufferance. They were exposed to dangers the most

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dreadful

dreadful and unavoidable. On the one hand, they had good reason to apprehend total ruin and desolation; on the other, there was just cause to expect the utmost severity of rage and cruelty. The pursuit of a numerous host of very inveterate enemies, full of the spirit of indignation and revenge, had rendered their resistance as vain, as their retreat was hopeless. And their advance was sure to meet with equal peril and disaster, from the overwhelming fury of the merciless ocean.

AMID this scene of deep dismay and desperation, behold the arm of the Almighty made bare in their behalf. A relief as extraordinary as unexpected was held out to them, by the over-ruling hand of Providence. A confidence of their security was at once suggested and recommended by Moses, in the words of the Text; *Fear ye not: stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,*

DISCOURSE X. 273

A distress not much dissimilar in many circumstances, in our own Nation, and a sudden and wonderful deliverance, beyond all expectation, and surpassing all hope, make the same words not improperly applicable to the great Event, which it is the pious design of the Church to celebrate on This Day. The situation of the people of England, just before that period, which way soever they directed their view, was truly deplorable. If they looked backward, nothing was to be seen, but the utmost confusion, the most complicated misery: the constitution of government totally dissolved: the legal administration of civil justice interrupted altogether, or grossly perverted: no security of men's fortunes or of their lives to be depended upon: the Church despoiled of its revenues and its ordinances: all decency and regularity of worship quite destroyed: all authority and jurisdiction in the religious establishment entirely at an end. In short, instead of

liberty and safeguard in the state, nothing but tyranny, disorder, and outrage: instead of the beauty of holiness in the temple, nothing but the horrid ignorance and tumultuous uproar of the rankest bigotry: instead of comfort and edification in the public service of God, nothing but the wildest rant of enthusiastic frenzy; nothing but the lowest dregs of the grossest fanaticism.

IF they cast their eyes forward, the prospect was not less melancholy and horrible. Nothing to be foreseen but even a worse scene of misery, if possible, to be acted over afresh: and the experience of former calamities gave a bitterness to the present, and added a sharpness to their apprehensions of the future. And what was no small aggravation of their trouble, no boundary of their misfortunes was at all discernable. They were without hope in their misery, and without comfort in their fears. When

lo!

lo! the impending storm, that threatened them with fresh woe and devastation, was at once dispersed; and all their terrors were dissipated together. The light of God's countenance shone forth on a sudden. The salvation of the Lord instantly appeared, in the mighty and unexpected deliverance, which was vouchsafed unto them.

WE are doubtless justified from Reason and Experience as well as from Revelation, in ascribing such important and uncommon events, as are above the wit of man, and not to be explained upon principles of Nature, to the immediate influence of the Almighty. In truth the common events of things are owing to the same over-ruling Power. We say indeed, what ordinarily passes in the world, proceeds from the stated course of Nature, and the established laws of the System. But what is this stated course of Nature? What are these established laws of the System, but the very

energy, and the direction of Providence? How do they otherwise exist or operate, but thro' the immediate agency of God? Can this stated course of things support itself? Or can these established laws put themselves in execution? Mere inanimate matter can act only by external impulse. The first movements of animal life no way depend upon the will or power either of the parent or the offspring. What mechanical causes can account for that Grand Principle, by which the air, the earth, the waters are governed? or be able to solve, thro' what secret ties the constituent parts of body are held together? The pride indeed of Philosophy would make us believe, that it is the force of gravitation, by which large masses of matter are knit together, and by which the order and the safety of the habitable world is preserved; and that it is the efficacy of another power somewhat analogous, by which their several parts are united, and compacted. But can a rational
mind,

mind, not misled by passion, or biased by prejudice, rest satisfied in these secondary causes alone? Whence, it may be said, have these principles themselves their respective energy? Whence has the one such a kind of efficacy, as to constitute the curious texture, and that variety of configuration in material substance, which is observable on the Earth beneath? Or whence has the other such a sort of force, as is sufficient to analyse the still more wonderful motions, we behold, in the Firmament above?

WHENCE are produced the strange effects of Vegetation? How is the uniformity of that motion in our Globe, which causes the vicissitude of day and night, so preserved, that the objects on the earth are not jumbled together, and dashed into pieces? What power has the Sun in itself to send forth his beams, of such mighty importance to the animal and vegetable world? The hand of the Almighty is not only visi-

ble in the stupendous workmanship of all these things; but also his immediate agency and direction in their marvellous operations.

IF then every thing is thus directly under the power of the Creator; Is there not a fair presumption? Have we not good reason to conclude, that every thing obeys his will, and is made subservient to the particular purposes of his wise Providence? What wonder, that “he balanceth the clouds, and sendeth the rain, and maketh the earth to yield her increase, just as he pleaseth?” Why should it be thought incredible, that the winds and the sea submit to his supreme command; or that the famine and the pestilence destroy, as seemeth him good? Well may it therefore be said, that the issues of life and of death, and all the events of human affairs are at his disposal alone; and that he prospereth the work of our

our hands, or defeateth our counsels, according to our own deservings.

AND what hinders, but the same special Providence may extend to the mind and behaviour of man, without over-ruling our wills, or affecting our liberty? The various inclinations and pursuits of the human kind depend upon such reasons and motives, as oftentimes present themselves to the understanding, we know not how, and upon such sentiments and dispositions of heart, as start up in the soul by strange and imperceptible means. The turn of our thoughts frequently takes its first bent, and the colour of our lives receives its original tincture from such inward suggestions, as we are not able to comprehend, whence they arise, or whither they lead; any more than we can tell of the blowing of the wind, "whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." And why may not the Spirit of God, by methods unknown and unperceived,

ed, lay before the mind of man such leading principles, as, if honestly and studiously attended to, may conduct his affairs to a prosperous issue; or leave him without check or controul, to follow his own vain or wicked imaginations, till they plunge him in ruin and misery, beyond redemption, according as he deserves either good or ill, from his Lord and Governor? The guilt or merit of our actions does not derive its source from those thoughts or principles themselves, but from our own studious attention to them, from our own cordial entertainment and assiduous application of them: things, that proceed from ourselves alone, and what are entirely in our own power.

BUT however intricate and doubtful a matter it may be, to set the just limit to the agency of Natural causes, and the efficiency of Providence; so as to say, "hitherto shalt thou come and no farther; and here shall thy
power

power be stayed:" however difficult and perplexing it is, to trace out in the human mind, where the inward workings of the soul begin of themselves, and where they are owing to the influence of God's spirit, in such instances, in which the good of Individuals is only concerned; yet in those cases, where the welfare of a whole Nation is at stake; where the importance therefore of the event demands more especially the care and conduct of the Almighty; and the unravelling the several parts of it, and the bringing them to a fair issue renders it an object worthy of his interposition; there we have good grounds to expect extraordinary dispensations; there our reasonings on this head are built upon a solid and firm foundation.

WHATEVER institutions take place in human affairs, that are productive of general good, must coincide with the great design of Heaven, in the creation and preservation

vation of the world. The social state then may fairly be reputed one of the principal instruments, in the hands of Providence, by which the blessings of life are most effectually conveyed to That Part of his creatures, who seem to be his more peculiar concern, by the singular provision that is made for their subsistence and welfare. Thus it is, that such establishments are stiled by the Apostle, "a Divine Ordinance." Whatever therefore is agreeable to the will of God in the appointment, cannot fail to partake of his care and support in the administration.

THE RESTORATION on this Day accomplished in These Kingdoms, was so wonderful in its beginning, in its progress, and in its completion, as may justly vindicate supernatural aid and providential direction. What else could produce the strange infatuation in the counsels of Some men, to their own perdition; convert the

fluctuating conduct of Others, to such salutary purposes; and so adjust the jarring and discordant principles of All, as to effect at once a perfect harmony and unanimity, in recovering the antient and rightful claims both of King and People? The usurped power of Legislature defeated its own designs, and embraced measures subversive of itself. HE, who took the glorious lead in bringing matters to a proper settlement, seemed at first to have had no certain and regular plan of acting; undetermined in his motions, and doubtful of consequences. The body of the Nation was torn in pieces by Factions both civil and religious; so furious and implacable in their own nature; of such irreconcilable and incompatible principles, as to make it seemingly a thing altogether impracticable, to bring about an union and acquiescence in any one establishment of Religion or Polity. When behold, all at once, without any previous concert or delibera-

liberation, the hearts of the People were bowed as the heart of one man. The Republican, and the Royalist, the Churchman, and the Sectarist concurred in one united endeavour, to place their lawful Sovereign on the throne of his Ancestors.

THE accomplishment of this event was in all its circumstances so singular and extraordinary, as to extort from a late Historian of those times, an open confession of something strange and marvellous. A large concession for so acute and philosophic an observer of men and things, who must be acknowledged to have no favourable impression of any Divine interpositions!

WHAT the salvation is, which was thus wonderfully wrought amongst us, is sufficiently manifest. The Land ceased from the defilement of blood. The Nation emerged from the depth of misery and despair. Religion put on a new face of decency

decency and dignity. Government resumed its wonted order and authority; and peace and security were administered by the even hand of Justice. Anarchy and confusion fled forth as a morning-cloud, and as the early dew they vanished away. And those great matters of civil discord, Prerogative and Privilege, kept their stated and due bounds. Thus the blessings of society were poured out in great abundance on all orders of men; and joy and happiness spread themselves to the remotest corners of the Land.

NEED I expatiate on these things? We know from an happy experience, how great the blessings indeed are, that spring from the best of Governments, administered in the most righteous manner. May they be perpetuated all our days! may they descend uninterrupted and unimpaired to our latest posterity!

IT

IT is matter of more useful admonition to reflect a little, what great Reason every Nation has to confide in the good, or to be fearful of the evil tendency of things, in proportion to those manners, that prevail among the members of it.

THERE are doubtless in every community certain principles of general influence, which truly characterize the People; upon the growth and maturity of which the fate of Kingdoms does in a special manner depend. This is beyond dispute the common measure of God's dealings with every nation under Heaven. What civil Polity indeed has there ever been, the virtuousness or viciousness of whose manners has not occasioned a proportionable enlargement or diminution of its power and grandeur? This point was remarkably displayed in the condition and circumstances of That State; the first establishment and final excision of which was one continued and extraordinary
mani-

manifestation of divine power and authority. And the two great empires of Greece and Rome, those illustrious and instructive parts of antient story, are a standing record of this truth, to all succeeding generations. As long as a rectitude and simplicity of Manners took the lead amongst them, invigorated their counsels, and animated their conduct; so long one admirable train of success and glory was the deserved crown of their enterprizes. But when once a total relaxation of Principles took place; whether through the influence of foreign example; whether through the flush of conquest, and domestic opulence; or through a vain confidence in their own superior strength and extraordinary elevation; whether through one or all of these means together, it matters not;* since the fact itself is altogether unquestionable; that astonishing pinnacle of envied fame and greatness,

* *Confiderations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Decadence.*

to which their pristine virtue had exalted them, began instantly to moulder away apace; and that immense fabric of their state, which had stood the wonder and awe of all the world around, soon after tumbled into ruins.

THE foregoing cursory reflections may help to teach us this profitable lesson, That a pious and virtuous conduct is the sure strength and glory of a Nation; an irreligious and immoral behaviour the certain weakness and reproach of any People; and may serve at the same time to silence in some measure those injurious Cavillings, which the Envy and Malice of our Enemies are apt to indulge, against the sacred Institutions of This Place. We are not unuseful Members of the Community, while we pass away our days in this Happy Recess, and are thus sequestered from Public Concerns, and the Business of the World. We contribute no small share to the welfare and
glory

glory of our Country; while we are carefully employed in the planting and cultivation of those Principles, which when brought forth to maturity cannot fail to yield the sweet fruits of religion and righteousness; and which may furnish out to the State, in times to come, as has oftentimes been the case, in times past, such illustrious instances of Persons, well qualified for the right administration of the affairs of Government, by an extraordinary degree of Wisdom in the contrivance of public measures, an uncommon share of Goodness and Steadiness in the direction, or a singular portion of Magnanimity and noble Prodigality of soul in the execution of them, as were the standing glory of their own times, and have ever been the admiration of the following ages; and may they be the study and emulation of All Posterity!

LET us therefore persevere with all assiduity, my Reverend Brethren, as indeed we

do, in a faithful discharge of the important trust reposed in us. The manners of the Rising Generation depend greatly upon the instructions received, and the principles imbibed, in these and such like Seminaries of religion and literature. Let it be our first care, as it is in truth our principal concern, to form the youthful and ductile mind, so far as our power and influence extend, to every good and useful principle both of duty and science. And may all those, who are trained up in these religious and learned retreats, make such an honest and sedulous use of the benefits they enjoy, that they may issue forth into the world, in such a manner, as to reflect Honour on the place of their Education, derive solid Comfort and lasting Happiness to Themselves and their Friends, become an Ornament to our Christian Profession, and a Security and Blessing to the whole Community!

DIS-

DISCOURSE XI.

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

IN THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

OCTOBER 25. 1762.

DISCOURSE XI.

MICAH IV. 4.

— *They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid.*

AMONG the numerous blessings, with which Providence has so singularly favoured the sons of men, the Social State must surely rank first, both in point of dignity and utility; as being the most fruitful source of comfort, and the truest ground of perfection and happiness. It is indeed a state the most suited to the condition and circumstances of our being. It is the surest and most expeditious method to supply the wants; the firmest and most effectual way

to support the weaknesses of our nature. It is the best expedient for the cultivation of the mind, the fittest means for the improvement of the heart of man. A situation of life, which Reason points out, which Nature requires, and Religion enjoins; a situation of life therefore, which the great Author of all things most evidently intended.

WELL may we wonder then at the folly and perverseness of man, or at his pride and singularity, or at the conjunction perhaps of these misleading and malignant principles, when we perceive the Social State, so big with blessings of the last importance to us, vilified and decried as the chief cause of our corruption and misery; and an uncivilized and savage life extolled and recommended, as our greatest glory and happiness.*

* Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. ——— par I. I. Rousseau.

ALL reasoning of this sort must be mere sophistry and declamation, as running counter to the common apprehension and experience of mankind; or if seriously meant, can have no other purport and tendency, than to degrade the dignity of a Rational Creature into the condition of a Brute Animal.

BUT whatever others may advance to this purpose, either for an exercise of their wit, or for a display of their learning and abilities; We should do well not to learn to be wise above that, which is written. Our Religion has taught us much better and more sober things. Christ and his Apostles enforce with all earnestness every social duty, by precept, by exhortation, by example; and endeavour to support with the weightiest sanctions the honour and the authority of civil Communities.

Now the Social State itself, though it is indeed the only instrument, by which the
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ordinary blessings of life can be conveyed to us, may yet become without proper management and direction a scene of confusion, and destructive of the peace and welfare of men. The administration of some civil power is essentially necessary to its well-being. The wickedness and perverseness of the human heart, which is not always to be led by a sense of duty, and a prospect of happiness, is frequently of such a nature, that penal sanctions and exemplary correction can alone give that condition of life, which both Nature and Reason have ordained, its due strength and security.

WHAT form of government may best serve the true and essential interest of Society, both reason and experience sufficiently evince. There is doubtless an intrinsic excellence in a civil constitution, which may justly claim a pre-eminence. A government the best administered is not in
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itself the best*. The manner, in which the Supreme Power is exerted in a state, may interrupt or destroy altogether the beneficial effects of a Good government; or convert the pernicious principles of a Bad one to salutary purposes; and yet the sufferings of the subject do not detract aught from the true merit of the Former; nor their easy and flourishing condition add any thing to the real worth of the Latter; any more, than the disorders introduced into a robust and healthy person, through want of care and conduct, prove the unhappiness of a good constitution; or the prevention of maladies in one that is sickly and enervated, through good management and circumspection, demonstrates the valuableness of a bad habit of body.

WHAT men may be urged to do, through caprice and prejudice, through ignorance and inattention, or through ne-

* Pope's Essay on Man. Epist. III. v. 304.

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cessity and compulsion, it is hard to say; and therefore it is in vain to argue from the nature and consequences of any species of government, against the reality of its establishment. For though the principles of reason may plainly set forth the great hazard and incommodioufness of several sorts of Polity; yet experience beareth witness, that they have All in their turns obtained in the world; nay, frequently by easy and unexpected transitions, they have risen out of each other.

YET notwithstanding, it is not difficult to determine their respective merits. It may be known, which is most accommodated to what is, or ought to be the end of civil Society; and which is found in fact best to answer that important purpose. The Social State can be only meant as a relief for the necessities of nature, and as a means to promote the felicity of man. Government then, which is the mere instrument

strument of its protection and support, must be in its best estate and highest glory, when it is made subservient to human happiness. Nature surely cannot intend, Providence most certainly could not ordain Civil Establishments, to gratify the pride, the luxury, or the ambition of one man, or any set of men, at the expence of the quiet and well-being of the rest of their fellow-creatures. The great and common Father of us all extends an equal care and concern over the whole race of man, and that with no other view but to their common and mutual happiness. Whatever subordinations therefore may take place amongst men, and do not coincide with this grand end of God's dispensations, They cannot be conformable to the Divine will. Nor can reason or nature indicate any other distinction between man and man, than what may arise from a superiour force either of body or of mind ; neither of which can be a just ground of civil dominion.

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And to this our holy Religion accords. The supreme Magistracy is there indeed made a very important and sacred trust; but yet a trust only for the good of Those, over whom it is appointed to bear rule.

BUT if reason and religion manifest to us, that the end of Government is the good of the whole community, People as well as Prince; it must follow that That species of Government must deservedly claim the highest degree of our regard and estimation, which is adapted to serve that purpose, in the best and most effectual manner. And a little reflection will shew us, that this must be, by putting the civil administration upon such a footing, as to give power without oppression, and liberty without licentiousness; to secure the Majesty of the Prince from any iniquitous practices of the People; and to guard the Privileges of the Subject from any sinister views of the Sovereign; to cast such a balance of power among the
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several parts of the Legislature, as to prevent every deviation from their original appointment, or to correct every wrong operation; to keep the wheels of government each in their proper sphere of motion, and yet each in their full force and activity; neither too rapid in their movements, through overweight of power, nor too sluggish and tardy in their operations, through too much clog and incumbrance: in short where the dependance on either side is reciprocal; and a mutual care and mutual concern for Each Others welfare can only be productive of mutual happiness.

Now this adjustment of the respective parts of the great Political Machine, so exquisite in itself, and of so beneficial influence on the good order and well being of the world, cannot be effected, where Sovereignty is deposited in the hands of any one man, or any one order of men, or in the confused body of the people; but where

the Supreme Power has its several departments, in a proper combination of them all.

WHERE the civil constitution is thus placed on its only true and durable basis, the mutual affection and mutual concern of Those that govern, and Those that are governed; there is still something wanting for its maintenance and stability. Religion must lend the state some foreign succour, and join a force and sanction from above to its authority and jurisdiction. This truth is incontestably established by the history of every known Empire in the world. The primary view and effort of Legislation has always been, to strengthen the frame of government, and corroborate its injunctions by some religious considerations; it being wisely foreseen, that the appearance of Divine power in favour of a civil constitution must ever bear so venerable and awful an aspect on the administration;

stration ; as is most apt to strike deepest the heart of man, excite most forcibly his reverence, and most powerfully engage his obedience. To this purpose feigned inspirations and divine communications were made eminently serviceable in the Antient World ; and the policies of the Moderns have availed themselves both of real and pretended revelations to singular advantage.

RELIGION not only throws over civil Government, an exterior air of respectableness, which is sometimes its greatest security ; but communicates also an internal vigour, and furnishes an efficacious remedy against the inward failings and corruption of it ; which is frequently its best support and preservation. It is oftentimes able to suppress those evil motions and wicked machinations of the heart, which a consciousness of secrecy may occasion, and which the power of human laws cannot restrain or reach. It suggests an inducement to obe-

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dience, not only for wrath but for conscience sake ; and disposes men to do that out of regard to God and his judgment, which the fear of man and civil judicature might not be able to compass. These reflections have the authority of that great Roman, whose knowledge in civil policy was as extensive and consummate, as his talent for eloquence was singular and masterly. This excellent judge has declared, That it is doubtful, whether a Community can possibly exist, that has not a prevailing mixture of Piety in its constitution.

WITHOUT all controversy, the Christian Religion of all others is the best adapted to promote the welfare of civil life. It endeavours to eradicate out of the mind of its disciples those black and turbulent passions, of the greatest malignancy and mischief in a state, a spirit of rancour and a spirit of revenge ; and to substitute others of the most benign influence, peaceableness and
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contentment in our respective stations, and what is the bond of all perfectness, universal charity. It strikes at the very root of every thing, that is introductive of evil to individuals, by ordering them to act up steadily to the great law of rational creatures, in the several relations we bear to God and man. It strives to secure the true interest and happiness of the whole Community, by enjoining the faithful and conscientious discharge of all social duty; honour and submission to those above us, mildness and condescension to those below us, courteousness and fidelity to those of equal condition, and kindness and benevolence to all. And it has taken care to enforce all this upon the most powerful of all principles, the fear of God, and by the most momentous of all sanctions, an everlasting state of retribution, according to all that has been done in this life, whether good or evil.

Now where a Religion of this kindly genius and salutary nature prevails in its genuine simplicity and native energy, not corrupted by superstitious fury and usurpation, nor debased and perverted by fanatical rage and enthusiastic frenzy; there government is most capable of upholding the just authority and due subordination of all ranks and degrees of men, upon which alone the welfare of the State depends.

THE happiness of a well-constituted government is yet incompleat, even under the influence of the best religion. There is still wanting to give it full strength and perfection, the care, the vigilance, the ability of some righteous Super-intendant and Director. The weakness or the wickedness of a Prince may spoil the best constitution, by stopping or polluting the streams of government, and thereby introducing such disorders, as may prove destructive of its nature, and fatal to the community. The
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history of our own Country abounds, alas! with too many lamentable instances of such misconduct on the part of the supreme Magistrate, through perverseness or folly, through intemperance, lust, or cruelty, through avarice, or vain-glory, as have ended in the ruin of private persons and families, or in the misery of the people. Nothing but the wisdom and goodness of the Monarch can prevent the like enormities, and establish in a nation universal peace and concord, the pure and ever-lasting fountain of National prosperity, and the happiness of All.

HAPPY, thrice happy then must be the condition of That People, whose Religious and Civil establishment has the just temperature above described, and is moreover under the rule and dispensation of ONE, who is as truly studious of the public good, as he is capable of promoting it. I need not point out the peculiar happiness

of the English Nation in this respect. Your own reflections must have gone before me, in the application of what has been advanced; and have suggested to your minds abundant reason for uniting in praise and thanksgiving to the great Lord of the Universe, upon the glorious solemnity of This Day; the Accession of his Present Majesty to a throne, thus established on the most solid foundation of true religion and righteousness.

“WE may sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree.” We have a plentiful enjoyment of every blessing of the social state, which Nature wants, or Providence designed; undisturbed in our possessions, safe in our persons, and secure of our liberty. We live in a land, abounding with every useful accommodation and elegant improvement of life, and that under the guardianship and protection of the best formed, and most wisely regulated government

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ment in the world. We live in the midst of a very perilous and wide-wasting war, and yet reap all the fruits of a profound peace; while the glory and terror of our arms is spread from the one end of the earth unto the other. Neither is this our happiness thus entire and perfect in the present tenure only, and precarious in the reversion: we have the most hopeful prospect of its permanence and perpetuity. Our illustrious Sovereign is endued with every requisite, which nature and education can bestow, to captivate the hearts, and retain the affections of a brave and generous people. He has shewn himself amiable and exemplary in his domestic situation. He has declared the most affectionate attachment to the interest, and fatherly concern for the welfare of the Public. He has exhibited the greatest magnanimity, steadiness, and fidelity in his foreign connections; where either the good of his own subjects, or the good of other nations, or

the good of mankind in general may be in any measure affected. And the experience we have of so many excellent accomplishments, which so signally adorn his present Majesty, gives us the happiest omen, that the same Christian Graces and Princely Virtues will never cease to be transmitted to the Royal Progeny; whose minds doubtless will be tutored, and whose manners will be formed to every good and useful purpose, by the precepts and the example of their great Progenitors. Thus shall our Nation flourish with glory and prosperity, and be blessed from generation to generation; "and there shall be none to make us afraid."

WHAT return then ought we to make for these singular benefits, which the Lord our God has thus conferred upon us? We can make no better return; no other return is indeed expected at our hands, than to order our conversation after such sort,

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as to render ourselves worthy of a continuance of these blessings. And this will be best done, by manifesting in our conduct a warm and steady love for our Country; that is, a zeal and affection, not for the air we breath, or the earth we tread upon; but for the welfare of our Community, for our King, and for our National Establishment both Civil and Religious.

IT was the force alone of this noble and animating principle, that exalted those Two Great States to such a pitch of heroism and grandeur; whose arms were so triumphant in the antient world, and whose military and civil glory have been the study and admiration of all succeeding ages. But if Nations, whose civil polity was liable to such turbulencies and confusion; whose members were so unsafe under the severities of Ostracism and Proscription; whose religious systems were so full of mockeries of God, and fooleries of men, without any
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rational grounds of recommendation, or any comfortable assurances of assistance and happiness; could yet cultivate with so much assiduity, and maintain in so full vigour the Love of their Country; how far ought We to surpass them in this respect; whose Government is so well modelled, and so justly administered; without such danger of encroachments on the Prerogative of the Governour, or the Privilege of the Governed, as must be ruinous to the safety of them both; whose Religion is not set off in the fantastical and immodest habit of Pagan folly, or in the foppish and absurd garb of Popish superstition; nor in the slovenly or freakish dress of Modern Sectaries; but in the sober and affecting attire of Primitive Antiquity; where a becoming mixture is observed of decency and dignity; and who have so truly respectable a Personage to preside over both the civil and religious administration, ONE, who glories in the name of Briton; who considers his
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own happiness upon every occasion inseparably connected with the welfare of his people; and who rightly judges, the more confidence, affection, and security there is on the part of his Subjects, the more firm and durable will be Their felicity and his Own, and the more widely extended the honour and power of his glorious Monarchy.

OUR love to our Country, my Reverend Brethren, will be shewn most to our own credit, and to the advantage of the Public, by studying with all diligence and application the nature and genius of our holy Religion and our admirable Civil Constitution; by gaining right notions ourselves of their superior excellence, and instilling into others a due knowledge of their dignity and perfection; by arming ourselves and inspiring others with prudence, zeal, and courage in the defence and support of them; and by cherishing and encouraging
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amongst us every sound principle of Loyalty to our Prince and his illustrious House. This is as evidently our true and lasting interest, as it is our special and indispensable duty; who enjoy in so eminent a degree the Royal Patronage and Favour, and so largely partake of the Royal Munificence.

F I N I S.



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